

Isabel
Allende
interviewed

PAGE 12

IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 13, NO. 20

APRIL 12-18, 1989

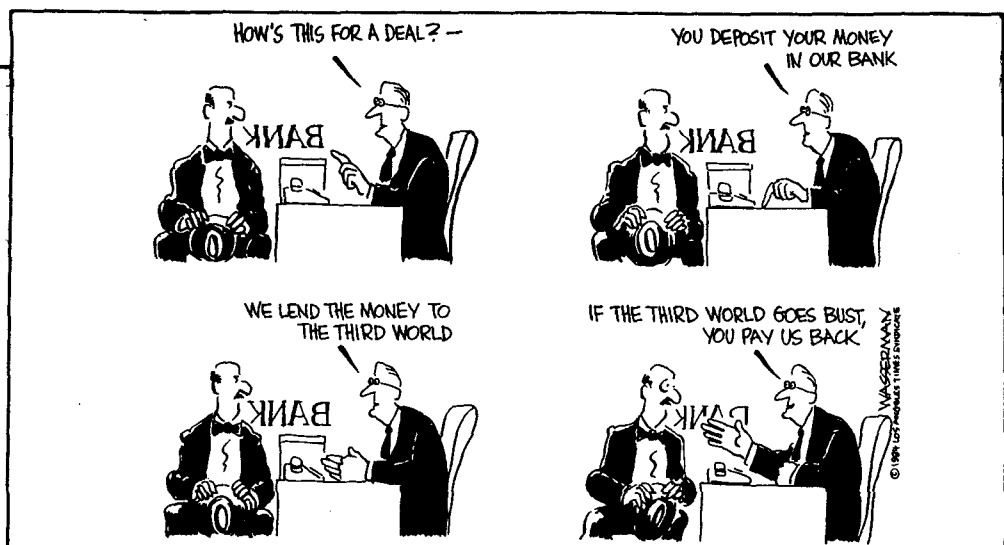
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EUROPE GOES TO THE SUPER MARKET

In 1992 corner-store countries
become one big chain, but will
prices be too high?

Diana Johnstone PAGE 11

ATTENTION WORLD SHOPPERS...



Brady's debt plan is short on principle

By Merrill Collett

"What is robbing a bank compared to owning a bank!"
—Bertolt Brecht, *The Threepenny Opera*

It was with that quote that author Penny Lernoux launched her 1984 exposé of avarice and criminality by the world's biggest banks. Lernoux's *In Banks We Trust* documented dozens of seamy deals, but some of the most flagrant abuses were perfectly legal and even were couched in high-sounding language. In 1982, for example, Ronald Reagan flew to Brazil and handed the government \$1.2 billion for debt relief. In fact, the U.S. taxpayers' money made only a brief stop in Brasilia. Its final destination was the coffers of Citibank, Chase Manhattan and Brazil's other foreign creditors. Brazil stayed broke, and the big banks stayed rich.

As the Bush administration pushes forward with a plan proposed by Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady to write off part of Latin America's debt, this might be a good time to review Lernoux's startling guide to the netherworld of crooks dressed up as pinstriped financiers. Although its details remain unclear, the Brady plan is already shaping up as a massive con job on U.S. taxpayers and Latin American countries alike.

Dubbed a "radical new Third-World debt plan" in one Reuters dispatch, the administration's proposal is actually a conservative attempt to protect the profits of private banks with public tax dollars while doing nothing to further Latin America's economic development. This much-heralded debt initiative is a far bigger break for the New York banks than the debtor nations. U.S. taxpayers stand to foot a good part of the bill.

Forgive and forget: The Brady plan, which was actually authored by Assistant Treasury Secretary David Mulford in consultation with the Japanese government, sets

as its goal a 20-percent reduction in the foreign debt of 39 Third-World nations within three years. Interest rates are also to be cut by 20 percent. In a March 10 speech Brady asked the banks to "forgive" this portion of the debt in return for a guarantee that if the debtor nations default on their remaining obligations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Japanese government will step in to bail out the banks. The salient fact here is that the World Bank and the IMF get their money from governments, especially the U.S. Treasury.

In essence, the Brady plan puts up tax dollars as collateral against private bank loans. Bankers, who have been begging for government support throughout the seven years of the world financial crisis, will finally get what they want—a fail-safe way to protect their profit margins by putting public funds at risk. As for the debtor nations, Brady's proposal is being received with cautious optimism by hard-pressed Latin American leaders, who see it as a welcome departure from the Baker plan. While he was Treasury secretary during the Reagan Administration, James Baker piously asked the banks to provide \$20 billion in new loans to Latin America, which has a total debt burden of \$415 billion. The Baker plan money was intended to help governments make their debt payments.

But Baker's moral appeal for voluntary cooperation fell on deaf ears in the boardrooms of the big banks. No new loans were forthcoming. Like the Baker proposal, Brady's plan is also voluntary, but the Latins see it as a step forward because it would reduce the total amount of regional debt rather than keeping Latin America on the endless treadmill of new loans to pay for old ones.

Yet the Brady plan will reduce Latin America's already slim chances of getting any new loans at all. A few days after Brady offered government guarantees if banks would write off part of the debt, Martin Feldstein, former chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, predicted that from now on the banks will refuse to lend Latin America any money at all unless they get explicit U.S. government guarantees. And without new loans, Latin America has no hope of buying the machinery and farm equipment it needs to grow and develop.

Feldstein's prediction about the banks seemed to have come true very quickly when the bankers' lobby, the 180-member Institute of International Finance, sent a letter to the IMF on March 23 pointedly warning that "banks need a new rationale to stay in the process" of foreign lending. But the bankers' threat is deceptive. They stopped lending to the Third World long ago. While talking incessantly about the "new money" set to spring forth at any moment, the banks turned off the flow of funds and reduced their overseas obligations.

The great sell-off: The retreat of the banks began years ago, but in the second quarter of 1988 it turned into stampede. The banks shed their Third-World loans like a snake drops its skin. By the end of the year Citicorp, Latin America's largest creditor, had sold off \$1.2 billion in loans to indebted nations; Chase Manhattan had gotten rid of \$1 billion worth; and Manufacturers Hanover had dropped \$656 million. The debt is no longer a crisis for the big banks. Referring to the great sell-off of 1988, Robert C. Cortaway, vice chairman of the Security Pacific Corporation, said, "This unquestionably is going to strengthen the banking system in this country."

Needless to say, the debt crisis continues in Latin

America. The loss of new loans has made the region a net exporter of capital every year for the last seven. Latin America's debt service payments during this time totaled \$180 billion, an amount equal to 45 percent of the total debt.

The tight-fistedness of the big banks has been particularly galling to Venezuela, which has faithfully made payments on its \$35-billion foreign debt in the expectation of getting new loans. Over the last five years Venezuela has shipped some \$28 billion in interest and principal to foreign creditors. But while Venezuela made good on its obligations, foreign commercial banks rejected the government's repeated requests for more money.

Venezuela was pushed into a severe liquidity crisis. One result was the anti-austerity riots at the end of February that took 300 lives and caused \$150 million in property damage. The notion that Venezuela must now ask Brady plan debt "forgiveness" does not sit well with the government. Interviewed by a U.S. TV network, presidential chief of staff Reinaldo Figueredo said that for Venezuela "it's not a problem of forgiving" old loans, but of getting new ones.

Let's make a deal: Venezuela is bargaining hard for new money. Its president, Carlos Andres Perez, was in the U.S. early this month for a round of debt talks with George Bush, U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford. But while Venezuela was trying to find its own way out of the debt trap, an organization of Latin American and Caribbean countries based in Caracas was announcing a plan to unite and bargain for a better deal for the region as a whole.

The Latin American Economic System (SELA) will convene a meeting later this year of its 26 member nations to approve a common program for bargaining with commercial banks like Citicorp and Chase, multilateral lending agencies such as the World Bank and the governments of the industrialized countries. A working paper now cir-

INSIDE STORY

culating among SELA member nations calls for the creation of an international organization to buy back loans from secondary markets, where Latin American debts have fallen to an average of less than half their face value.

SELA was founded in 1975 by Mexican President Luis Echeverria and Perez, during his first term as president of Venezuela. For most of its existence SELA served as a think tank for pro-Latin American points of view, but recently it has begun to have wider political influence.

In 1985 SELA delegates voted unanimously to condemn the U.S. economic embargo against Nicaragua. The decision represented one of the few times that Latin America as a whole has gone up against Washington.

SELA has had less success in taking joint action on the debt issue, but Perez del Castillo, secretary general of SELA, said Latin America's economic crisis is pushing countries to unite out of necessity. "The social tensions experienced by every country in the region in the last few years have created a new consciousness. If we [in Latin America] don't reach a unified position on the foreign debt now, we're going to be pushed into much more radical solutions in the future." Latin America's next recourse would be a total debt moratorium, he said.

SELA's efforts to organize debtor nations may already seem too radical for U.S. bankers and government leaders, who have long held to a country-by-country approach. That remains one of the principles of the Brady plan. Bilateral negotiations have allowed the banks to isolate debtor nations and muddle through the years of the world credit crisis, but Perez del Castillo said the Latin Americans have learned "the hard lesson," that isolated agreements between individual debtor countries and their creditors never resolve Latin America's common problem—an "unpayable debt."

Merrill Collett writes regularly for *In These Times* on Latin America.

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657, (312) 472-5700. The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright © 1989 by Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, IL, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 1912 Debs Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 13, No. 20) published April 12, 1989, for newsstand sales April 12-18, 1989.

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON, D.C.

NO POLITICAL ISSUE CURRENTLY PRODUCES as much fear and loathing as foreign investment. The *Washingtonian*, for example, recently ran a cover story on Japanese investment in the U.S. entitled "Pearl Harbor II." In its annual survey, *Foreign Affairs* featured an article by financier Felix Rohatyn on "America's Economic Dependency." And books like Martin and Susan Tolchin's *Buying into America: How Foreign Money is Changing the Face of Our Nation* are beginning to appear in bookstores.

In the 1988 presidential campaign, several Democratic candidates tried to run on a platform of "economic nationalism." In the last weeks of his fading campaign, even Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis got into the act. Appearing at the Moog Automotive plant in Wellston, Mo., Dukakis charged that "the Republican ticket wants our children to work for foreign owners and owe their future to foreign owners." Unfortunately for Dukakis, Moog turned out to be owned by a multinational corporation headquartered in Luxembourg.

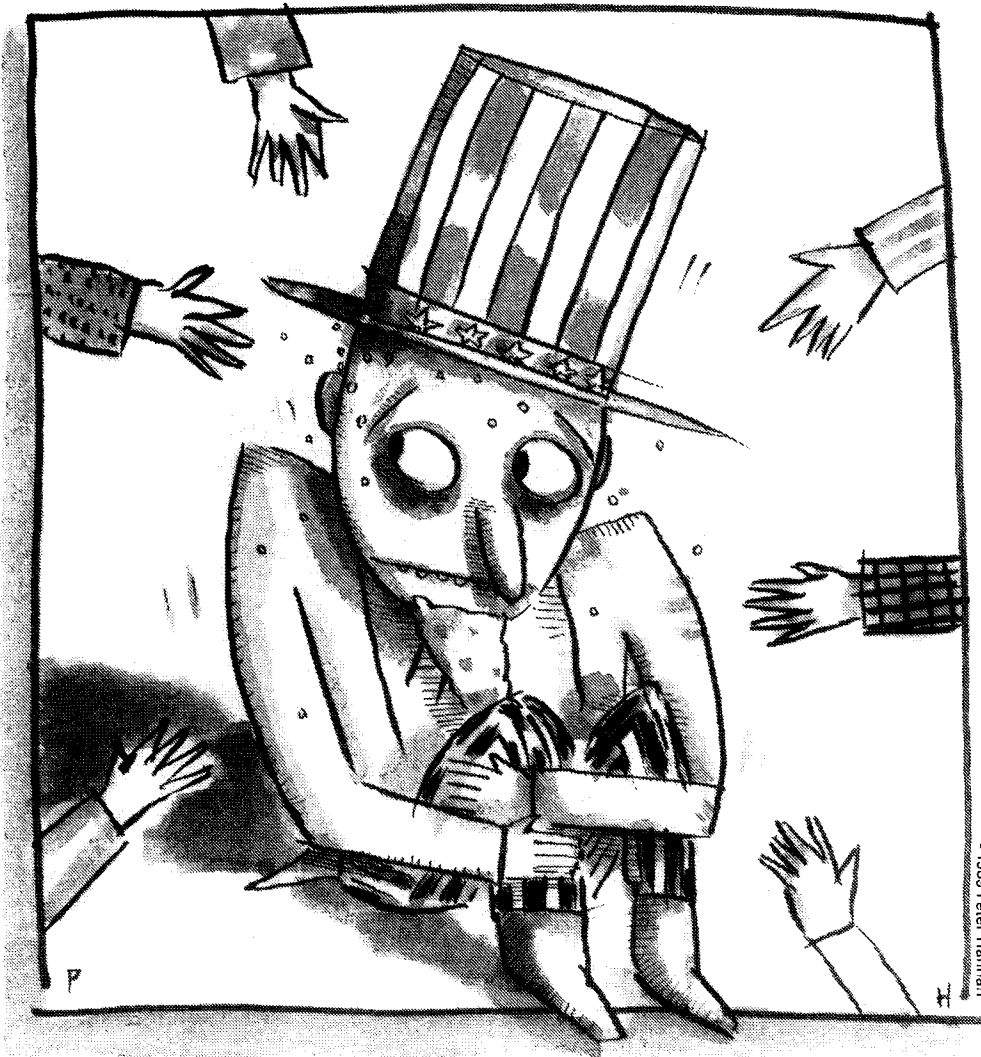
How much basis is there for these fears of foreign control? Have we laid aside our fear of Soviet communist domination only to conjure up an equally irrational fear of Japanese control? Or does foreign penetration of American manufacturing and banking pose a real threat to American freedom and prosperity?

Q-Tips and bank shares: There is no disputing the fact of increased foreign economic penetration. As Norman Glickman and Douglas Woodward show in *The New Competitors*, their impressive new book about foreign investment, foreign ownership of industry, finance and real estate increased 845 percent from 1975 to 1987. In 1970 foreign holdings in the U.S. totaled \$3 billion; by 1987, they were \$262 billion. In addition, foreign governments, banks and individuals now own \$1.3 trillion in American stock and bond portfolios.

Foreign direct investment has been concentrated in manufacturing. Foreign firms dominate the domestic cement and consumer electronics industries and control a major share of the machine tool, chemical, auto parts and tire industries. Familiar products like Vaseline, Q-Tips, Almaden wine, Bantam books, Columbia records, Firestone tires and Kool cigarettes are now produced in the U.S. by foreign multinationals. Much of book and magazine publishing is foreign-owned, from Doubleday and Harper & Row to *Ms.* and *TV Guide*.

Today Japanese banks own five of the 10 largest banks in California, and Japanese firms have bought significant shares in key American securities firms, from Shearson Lehman Bros. to Paine Webber. Zurich's Credit Suisse owns 44.5 percent of First Boston. A Toronto firm, Olympia & York, is the largest owner of commercial real estate in Manhattan.

During the last eight years foreign purchases of U.S. Treasury bonds made it possible for the U.S. to run huge deficits without incurring recession-causing double-digit interest rates. According to Washington economist Steven Marris, interest rates would have risen 3.5 to 5.5 percent higher without the foreign portfolio investment that began in 1983.



Xenophobia is latest item in the trade in enemies

But what do these undisputed facts mean? Some critics of foreign investment have strayed into a kind of anti-Japanese xenophobia, focusing entirely on Japanese investment, even though the Japanese trail the United Kingdom, Canada and continental Europe in ownership of American assets. In contrast to the British and Canadians, the Japanese have also concentrated on building new plants in the U.S. rather than on buying and selling existing businesses.

Fewer jobs: But the defenders of foreign investment wildly overstate their own case, claiming that foreign investment provides jobs and reduces the American trade deficit. Glickman and Woodward show that, on the contrary, foreign investment has resulted in fewer manufacturing jobs and a greater trade deficit.

Glickman and Woodward estimate that from 1982 through 1986 foreign affiliates eliminated 56,000 jobs. This happened because 96 percent of foreign investment has been directed at buying existing firms rather than creating new ones. Like their American counterparts, foreign owners have liquidated firms to pursue short-term gains or have even moved firms back overseas to seek lower production costs.

A good example is French Canadian financier Robert Campeau. In 1986 Campeau bought Allied Stores, which includes Brooks Brothers and Bonwit Teller. Within a year Campeau sold off 16 of the giant retail firm's 24 divisions, leaving 4,000 workers on the streets. In 1988 the rapacious Campeau performed a similar operation on Federated Department Stores.

Foreign firms also have imported components like auto parts or computer chips rather than relying on domestic suppliers. This has meant fewer jobs in the U.S. and a higher trade deficit. In 1986 foreign affiliates imported \$124 billion and exported \$51 billion, adding \$73 billion to the nation's trade deficit.

Foreign firms have also created other problems. Some have built plants in white, non-union areas. When Honda located its new factory in Marysville, Ohio, auto workers successfully brought suit before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Other firms, like the German chemical giant BASF, have had long, bitter battles with labor unions.

But while these problems undercut the case for foreign investment, they don't justify attempts to block it, because none of these problems are unique to foreign multinationals. American firms have also engaged in

The real problem with foreign investment in the U.S. is that it acts just like homegrown big business—buying up politicians as well as factories and real estate.

buyouts and takeovers that have reduced employment. American firms have also sought out white, non-union areas in the South and Southwest. In short, domestic multinationals have created the same problems as foreign ones. If there is a solution to these problems, it would seem to lie in more government supervision of both domestic and foreign firms.

Foreign firms do tend to repatriate their profits, rather than reinvesting them in the U.S. But according to a recent *New York Times* study, American firms are increasingly spending their profits overseas. For instance, in 1988 Goodyear channeled \$207 million, or about 28 percent of its capital spending, into upgrading factories abroad. It would seem more important for government to direct American firms toward productive investment at home than to block foreign firms from investing here.

Critics of foreign investment confuse symptom and cause. For instance, Japanese investment in new auto and steel plants in the U.S. is not a cause, but a symptom, of American industrial decline. As American firms have abdicated, searching out quick short-term profits and moving their operations overseas, foreign firms have rushed in to fill the vacuum.

Glickman and Woodward write, "In the final analysis, 'buying of America' is really not an external problem. Rather, America has serious internal problems—owing to short-term business planning, the lack of long-run investment commitments, slow economic and productivity growth, and mismanagement of economic policy."

Screening multinationals: Nevertheless, foreign multinationals pose special problems—problems that every other advanced capitalist nation addresses but that the U.S. ignores. Other nations block foreign purchases when there is a viable domestic option. This is appropriate, because under domestic ownership profits are more likely to remain at home and production is more likely to be tied to domestic research.

Other nations also prevent foreign investors from buying up certain kinds of firms. These include not only firms that produce goods critical for national security, but also firms in publishing and communications that are responsible for advancing national culture and the national political debate.

The U.S. government currently screens some foreign purchases, but arbitrarily. In 1987, for instance, the U.S. blocked the sale of Fairchild Semiconductor to the Fujitsu Corporation on the grounds that an important Pentagon supplier should not fall into foreign hands. But Fairchild was already owned by a French multinational, Schlumberger. The real issue, it turned out, was the Japanese trade surplus, and the Fairchild case was merely being used as part of trade negotiations.

Other nations also drastically limit political activity by foreign firms, but the U.S. has a completely lax attitude. Under the Federal Election Commission's current interpretation, foreign subsidiaries can organize political action committees (PACs) and fund candidates without identifying themselves as foreign lobbies.

In 1982 Nissan's PAC tried to prevent the re-election of Sen. Jim Sasser (D-TN) because of Sasser's support for domestic content legislation. Sony lobbied hard and used

Continued on page 22

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By Joel Bleifuss

Chernobyl in every bite

One year ago Skip Brack of the Center for Biological Monitoring in Hulls Cove, Maine, began filing freedom-of-information requests with the Food And Drug Administration (FDA), asking for the results of an FDA survey on radioactive contamination of imported foods. Brack, an amateur scientist who has spent years collecting information on radioactive pollution, eventually received some information that has not before been publicly released. In the 32 months following the April 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident, the FDA tested samples of foods imported from Europe for radioactive isotopes, including cesium 137, a radioactive element with a 30-year half-life. According to the FDA report, between Feb. 1, 1987, and Oct. 5, 1987, the agency tested 411 samples of food—such as pasta, spices, mushrooms, nuts, tea, juice concentrates and cheese. Of those 411 samples taken by the FDA (only a miniscule portion of all European food imported during that period), 44 percent contained above-normal levels of cesium 137, and 20 percent contained levels of cesium 137 above 1000 picocuries per kilogram. That level of cesium 137 is much more than humans usually consume in their food. In 1985 in Denmark, for example, the average annual intake per person of cesium 137 was only 2,200 picocuries. The FDA says it did block 20 shipments of food that were found to exceed the agency's 1982 cesium 137 "action level"—the level of contamination permitted before the FDA intervenes—of 10,000 picocuries per kilogram.

In you for life: Dr. Judith Johnsrud, director of the Environmental Coalition on Nuclear Power, a Pennsylvania-based organization, told *In These Times* that although eating cesium-contaminated food does not pose an immediate health danger, it does have long-term health risks. Said Johnsrud, "Cesium incorporates into the body tissues, muscles and bones, where it constitutes an internal emitter of radiation. So as the cesium decays over time, the energy released passes through the cell where it may initiate a malignancy. But because the latency period between the initiation of the damage and the clinical appearance of a tumor or leukemia is so long, it is very difficult to identify the cause and effect." Dr. Richard Piccioni, the senior staff scientist for Accord Research, a New York City-based environmental group, says that what "is significant about [the cesium-contaminated food] is how high that allowable limit of [10,000 picocuries per kilogram] is. Below that limit the FDA does nothing. The reason, of course, why they have such high allowable levels is so that domestic reactor accidents like Three Mile Island can take place without having to alert the public to real dangers."

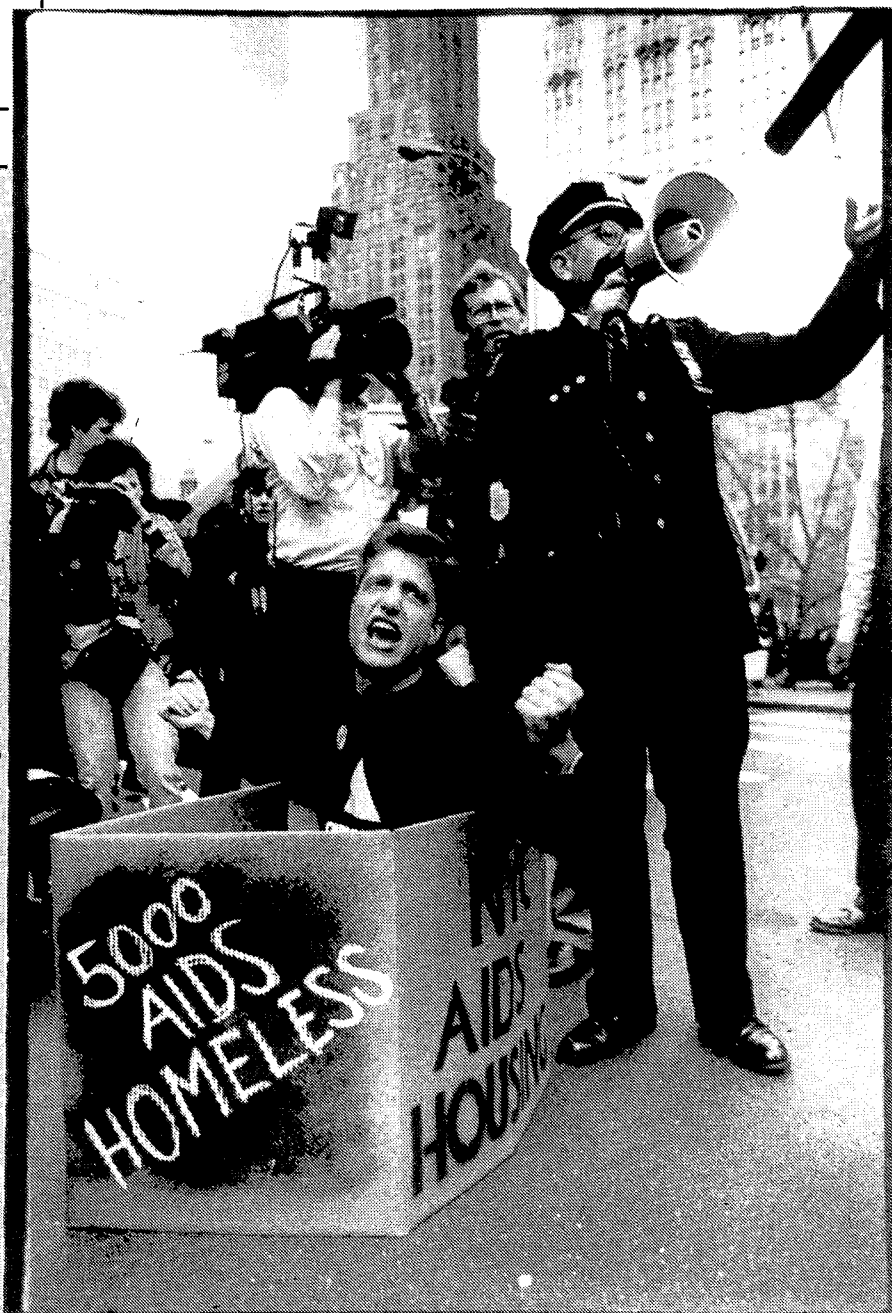
Lettuce is no. 5

The Food and Drug Administration's lackadaisical attitude toward protecting the public from contaminated food is nothing new. One of the In These Times articles most often requested by readers is an "In Short" item that appeared Oct. 7, 1987 under the title "Bon appetit." It is reprinted here in its entirety.

FDA testing has detected pesticide residues in 48 percent of the samples of the 26 most popular fruits and vegetables, according to an investigation by the Washington, D.C.-based Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). "This figure is probably an understatement," NRDC scientist Lawrie Mott told *Nutrition Action Healthletter*. "The FDA's routine monitoring methods can detect only half of the chemicals put on food." The Environmental Protection Agency has identified nine of the 25 most commonly found pesticide residues discovered by the FDA as carcinogens. And although most of the residues are within legal limits, the NRDC maintains that those limits do not necessarily denote safety, especially when the pesticide is carcinogenic. The domestic fruits and vegetables that the FDA found to contain pesticide residues more than 40 percent of the time are, from top to bottom: celery, cherries, strawberries, grapefruit, lettuce, peaches, apples, carrots, spinach and pears. As for imported produce, add to that list: bell peppers, cucumbers, cantaloupe, tomatoes, cabbage, oranges, green beans and grapes.

At the trough

Arms exports played an integral part in the Reagan administration's foreign policy. According to a 1981 presidential foreign policy directive, "The U.S. ...views the transfer of conventional arms and other defense articles and services as an essential element of its global defense posture and an indispensable component of its



Hear ye, Hear ye: On March 28, about 3,000 people gathered outside a cordoned-off New York City Hall to protest what demonstrators characterize as the Koch administration's "blatant negligence, disregard and mismanagement" of the AIDS crisis. The demonstration, sponsored by New York City AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP), succeeded for a time in blocking traffic on the Manhattan side of the Brooklyn Bridge. About 500 police arrested 211 people. Above, awaiting arrest is a member of the Box Tops, an ACT-UP affinity group that focuses on the problems of New York City's homeless citizens who have AIDS or are infected with the AIDS virus. The Partnership for the Homeless, a New York City advocacy group, estimates that the city streets are home to 90,000 people, 8,000 to 11,000 of whom have AIDS or AIDS-related illnesses. But the city's Human Resources Administration has set aside only 74 beds for people with AIDS. Mayor Ed Koch has promised that by 1991 the city will provide an additional 838 beds, at which time the Partnership for the Homeless estimates that New York City will have 25,000 to 31,000 homeless with AIDS or AIDS-related illnesses.

© Donna Binder, Impact Visuals

Just say 'war'

In their war on drugs, U.S. officials look for success where they can find it. For example, in its recently released 1989 report on international drug control, the State Department praised Peru for last year's eradication of 12,500 acres of coca, the plant cocaine is made from. Not much compared to the 289,000 acres the report says are still under cultivation in Peru, but it was an improvement over 1987, when less than 900 acres of coca were destroyed.

How did the State Department win this skirmish in the drug war? Last year Peru's eradication teams were given gasoline-powered trimmers to cut down the coca bushes; in previous years they dug up the plants by hand. A seemingly obvious technological advance, except for the fact that coca plants, when pruned, grow back stronger.

State Department spokeswoman Catherine Shaw says that at least the bushes are temporarily out of production, long enough for the department's long-planned coca herbicide program to take out the coca plants (and all other vegetation) permanently. Or as some observers put it, long enough to raise the eradication statistics in the department's annual report to Congress. This bureaucratic shell game would be amusing if it weren't for the fact that the U.S. insistence on "getting the numbers up" is drawing the U.S. further into a

jungle war.

The State Department is a key player in that war. It channels most U.S. drug control funds to foreign governments. And to help those governments carry out drug control operations, the department has created a mini-Air Force—known as the Air Wing. Peru, for instance, has nine helicopters and a C-123 transport on loan from the Air Wing.

These aircraft, piloted by U.S. civilians, transport coca eradication teams and members of Peru's anti-drug police, a special unit that has been trained in jungle warfare by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

But who are they fighting? The official targets are drug traffickers, especially those who run the trade in Peru's Huallaga Valley, the largest coca-growing zone in the world. But there are few Miami Vice-style shoot-outs with designer-clothed drug lords.

The situation in Huallaga has been complicated by the growth of the Shining Path insurgency. These heavily armed guerrillas reportedly control some 90 percent of the valley, making them the de facto political power in many local communities. The group owes much of its success in the Huallaga to the U.S.-sponsored coca eradication program. Coca production is the only way many of the area's poor farmers can survive. To protect their livelihood, area residents have increasingly

turned to the insurgents.

Under such circumstances, the lines between counterinsurgency and drug control get easily blurred. One danger is that U.S. personnel will go to battle with the Shining Path and the conflict will escalate.

U.S. personnel and aircraft have come under attack. Last year a U.S. pilot was slightly wounded. The State Department says it's impossible to determine if guerrillas were responsible. Although the U.S. has publicly downplayed concerns about the guerrillas, earlier this year U.S. personnel were temporarily withdrawn from the Huallaga. According to spokeswoman Shaw, the U.S. is "in the process of re-evaluating the security situation."

But there's no sign that the U.S. intends to re-evaluate its crop eradication strategy. The State Department still plans, once the Peruvian government gives its final OK, to spray the valley with a potent herbicide. Many fear the resulting chemical deforestation could be a further catalyst to the Huallaga war.

U.S. politicians and a large part of the public are calling for the U.S. military to mobilize against the foreign drug lords. The downing of a U.S. crop-dusting plane or the death of a pilot could be all it would take to add a new statistic to the State Department's drug control reports—the body count of U.S. personnel.

—Jo Ann Kawell

Add crocodiles

SAN DIEGO—The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) plans to dig a ditch. The five-foot-deep, 14-foot-wide trench would stretch along the Mexican border east of San Diego and Tijuana. Critics liken the 4.5-mile ditch to an inverted Berlin Wall. Proponents argue that the \$2-million trench will thwart alien and contraband smuggling.

INS representatives did not attend a March 22 hearing conducted by the California Senate Select Committee on Border Issues, Drug Trafficking and Contraband, where more than a dozen people testified against the plan. "I don't think they can defend [the ditch]," said Robert Martínez of the American Friends Service Committee in San Diego.

The INS had originally proposed the ditch as a solution to the contamination of Mexican drinking water by farm and construction runoff in the U.S. But according to environmentalists, the ditch could rob the nearby Otay Mesa of the natural rainwater pools it needs to sustain many species of plants and animals.

Mexican officials have denounced the project. They contend that the U.S., with a false show of concern for the Mexican environment, is deliberately misleading them as to the actual intent of the trench.

"We have to do something to take control of our own border," said Rep. Ron Packard (R-CA), "and a physical barrier is probably it."

Former U.S. Attorney Peter Nuñez of San Diego said the ditch is needed to stop vehicles carrying illegal immigrants and drugs. Nuñez is an advisory board member of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a xenophobic Washington, D.C.-based lobby that has released a 90-page study, "Ten Steps to Securing America's Borders." The group's report proposes fortification of U.S. borders with both Canada and Mexico.

FAIR spokesman Mark Krikorian says his group would go one step further than the government. FAIR is proposing a "sunken fence." Coming from Mexico, potential "border-hoppers" would encounter a downward slope that ends abruptly in a 12-foot vertical concrete wall. The obstacle

would be "invisible from a short distance away," says Krikorian.

According to Mexico's Foreign Minister Fernando Solana, "What interests Mexico is building bridges, not ditches." Krikorian dismisses such opposition as a ploy to co-opt Mexico's leftist opposition and thus prevent the National Democratic Front's Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas from making the ditch a political issue.

"Basically, when we build the ditch, the ditch is built and they have to live with it," adds Krikorian.

After Mexico protested the project through formal diplomatic channels last February, the State Department replied that "new options are being considered for drainage problems in the Otay Mesa area.... The matter has not been decided either way."

A House subcommittee will hold hearings on the issue this spring, but both FAIR and the INS expect the ditch to be completed this summer. FAIR hopes the construction of this trench will set a precedent. As Krikorian told *In These Times*, "You have to get your feet wet before jumping into the pool."

—Kevin O'Donnell

Quayle's House seat captured by female Democrat

Ever since Dan Quayle was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1976, Indiana's 4th Congressional District has been a conservative Republican stronghold. But in a special election to fill the seat vacated when Quayle protégé Rep. Dan Coats was appointed to the Senate as the vice president's replacement, a Democrat bested her Republican opponent, Dan Heath, by 65,160 votes to 63,388.

Jill Long, the new Democratic representative, brings the number of women in Congress to 26 and increases the House Democratic majority to 259. Long's carefully crafted image of competence, moderation and business expertise attracted many voters who would not otherwise have voted for a woman. Eschewing feminist identification, Long projected herself as acceptable in mostly male terms to a largely conservative electorate.

But during the campaign she did develop a bond with women voters—a bond that was strengthened when a TV ad by Heath backfired. The spot featured a white motorcycle policeman hectoring candidate Long about alleged campaign misstatements. Her conservative stance apparently played well in the Hispanic communities, which gave her their votes. And the 4th District black community leadership was behind her from the beginning. However, neither constituency is numerically significant in the district.

A professor of business, statistics and finance at Ft. Wayne's Purdue University, Long also owns and operates an 80-acre farm. Voters saw Long's experience and expertise as applying not only to agriculture, but

also to industrial reconstruction. This was especially important in Ft. Wayne, which has been beset with major plant closings and economic downturns since the late '70s.

Republican opponent Heath had touted his government work experience in the prenomination caucuses, so Long held him accountable for the fact that Heath was chief of staff for Paul Helmke, Ft. Wayne's Republican mayor, who had promised no

tax raise and no new annexations to the city. Once in office Helmke raised taxes and was eager to annex a prosperous northern suburb.

Brad Senden, Long's political consultant and campaign director, describes his boss as a "a proud conservative Democrat with strong family ties." Her election, says Senden, validates his vision of a Democratic Party moving away from liberalism.

—George Fish

Democrat Jill Long will fill Dan Quayle's old House seat.



Dean Musser, Journal Gazette

foreign policy." But are there other uses for arms, besides fighting wars? Jean Cobb and John Zindar write in *Common Cause Magazine* that some people in the defense industry believe that "foreign policy concerns soon may be overshadowed by arguments about the role arms exports can play in reducing the trade deficit and in shoring up America's defense industry during an era of stagnating domestic military budgets." Joel Johnson is one such person. He is the vice president of the American League for Export and Security Assistance, the organization that lobbies Congress for the 24 largest U.S. defense exporters. Johnson told *Common Cause*, "As defense procurement drops, it will become more apparent to the military that the only way to maintain an efficient rate of production will be to have exports fill part of that gap." That is, exports funded by the U.S. government.

Death merchants: According to U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency statistics, between 1973 and 1986 the U.S. military-industrial complex provided Third-World nations with more than 25,000 tanks, 12,000 surface-to-air missiles, 10,000 artillery pieces, 6,000 military aircraft and 400 armed boats. The countries paid for much of this military hardware with low-interest loans from the U.S. government. As a result, some 37 countries now owe the U.S. more than \$23 billion. Many of the countries that received the loans are now having trouble repaying. Consequently, in its 1990 budget the Bush administration is proposing (as the Reagan administration did during the 1989 budget process) that Congress approve, and then forgive, \$5 billion in loans to foreign nations for the purchase of military equipment from the U.S. defense industry. In effect, the loans will be grants. The administration argues that by giving away \$5 billion in arms, the U.S. will help "ease the [recipient] countries' debt burden." The administration does not mention that this in turn will ease the bad loan burden of American banks and fill the coffers of military contractors. As a congressional aide told *Common Cause Magazine*, "[T]he taxpayer is getting screwed."

Red-baited professor sees green

On Jan. 10, 1987, the *Bangor Daily News* published an article that described Howard Schonberger as a "self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist Communist who has worked against the U.S. for the past 25 years." Schonberger, a University of Maine history professor who was active in Central American solidarity work, wrote the paper protesting this description, as did 10 of his 14 department colleagues. The *Daily News* responded to the letters, saying that it stood by the story. Later that month, John Day, the paper's Washington correspondent, wrote in an opinion piece that if Schonberger was a "Marxist-Leninist Communist who has worked against the U.S. for the past 25 years," then he was guilty of treason. Day suggested that an investigation of Marxist influence at the University of Maine might be in order. At that point Schonberger decided to sue. Last month his case went to trial. He described the experience to *In These Times*.

Taking a stand: "When I was on the witness stand, the lawyer for the newspaper tried to red bait me, suggesting that the scholarly articles and newspaper opinion pieces I had written were like those of Communists and people who worked against the U.S. My lawyer and I had decided that I would talk about my being a democratic socialist... I explained what that meant, speaking in terms of cooperation and concern for the public welfare, and said that this sense of public well-being was undermined by the military-industrial complex.... The newspaper's lawyer tried to trick me up, asking what was the difference between a 'big c' and a 'small c' communist. He pulled out two posters, each containing statements from my deposition. One was one labeled "democratic socialist" and the other "communist," and he compared them. He had also gotten my personnel files from the school. The chairman of the department had written in one report that I was the adviser to such offbeat organizations as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). So the paper's lawyer started grilling me about SDS. I pointed out that this had been written in 1973-74, when SDS didn't even exist, and that my department chair was a historian, but he wasn't very accurate and what he probably had done was gotten SDS mixed up with Maine Peace Action Committee. The lawyer then took out the comic book *Marx for Beginners* and read from that book. He tried to fluster me, but it didn't work. In the end the jury voted in my favor, unanimously awarding me \$50,000 in personal damages and \$450,000 in punitive damages. If that judgment stands through the appeal to the Maine Supreme Court I will give the bulk of it to Nicaraguan hurricane relief."



Chicago Mayor-elect Richard M. Daley and daughters celebrate a sweeping victory after a carefully managed campaign.

The rich get Richie, the poor get poorer

By David Moberg

CHICAGO

RICHARD M. DALEY'S OVERWHELMING VICTORY in the April 4 mayoral race resurrected the remnants of old machine politics in a new guise and shattered the black-dominated reform coalition that had elected Harold Washington mayor in 1983 and 1987.

Daley won with 55.7 percent of the vote, compared to 40.8 percent for black Alderman Timothy Evans, an important Washington ally who formed the Harold Washington Party especially for the election. Republican Ed Vrdolyak, a wayward Democrat and bitter rival of the late black mayor, finished with a pathetic 3.5 percent of the vote. Daley ran a tactically astute campaign fueled by more than \$6.5 million raised primarily from establishment lawyers, businessmen and developers.

Teflon boss: Daley campaigned as the candidate above the fray, constantly eschewing "the name-calling and bickering" of local politics and repeatedly dismissed all attacks as "just political charges." He studiously avoided community forums and skipped the general election's one televised debate, relying on tightly controlled campaign appearances throughout the city and at least \$2.5 million in TV advertising. The old machine apparatus of precinct captains in the working-class and lower-middle-class "white ethnic" wards delivered votes more efficiently than usual.

Daley carefully avoided racial appeals in his campaign, thus making many white liberals feel comfortable about voting for him.

He didn't need to mention race to his core supporters, many of whom had one simple desire: a white mayor. Daley's association with his father, the late Mayor Richard J. Daley, only deepened their commitment.

Likewise, leaders of the downtown business establishment yearned for the stability that they thought a long reign by the 46-year-old Daley could bring. They also hoped for an end to pressure from community groups and

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for a return to the elder Daley's devotion of city resources to downtown financial interests.

For the sake of the campaign Daley made himself a moderate—reversing himself on issues such as gay rights and abortion. And he chose improving education—a widely popular goal—as his primary campaign issue, even though he presented virtually no program beyond appointing a deputy mayor for education. While studiously avoiding clear commitments about what he would do as mayor, Daley constantly talked of his concern about schools, jobs, housing, crime and drugs.

Daley's strategy "reduced the size of the target," according to Evans adviser Don Rose. While obviously gaining great support from identification with his father and the Democratic machine remnants, he did nothing to cultivate that connection, making it more difficult for his opponents to attack him as a reincarnation of Richard J. Daley. He also tried to transcend politics as the good manager who

was not involved in the fractious "council wars" of the Washington era.

The campaign belied Daley's own record. Vrdolyak, for example, said recently that Daley backed him throughout his battles with Washington, but "he was just hiding behind a tree." In 1987 Daley openly backed a third-party candidate against Democratic nominee Washington. But that didn't stop Daley Democrats from attacking Jesse Jackson for backing Evans' third-party bid.

Divide and conquer: But neither Evans nor Acting Mayor Eugene Sawyer—who failed in a Democratic primary effort—was able to hit the carefully shrunk Daley, target or to present a compelling message on his own behalf. Both their fates may have been sealed a week after Washington's Nov. 25, 1987, death, when a few black aldermen joined the white opponents of the late mayor to install Sawyer, a black alderman who had previously been part of the Washington bloc. Evans, the favorite of most Washington allies, lost out in the power play. It was a deliberate, successful ploy to divide the blacks and the Washington coalition and to

Daley carefully avoided racial appeals in his mayoral campaign, thus making many white liberals feel comfortable about voting for him.

set up a weak opponent for the next election.

Washington, through the force of his own personality and his reform message, had been able to unite blacks and to muster a substantial minority of Hispanics and around 15 percent of whites to win both his elections narrowly. But the vast majority of whites had rejected Washington at the polls, even though they overwhelmingly now claim to see him as a good mayor—just as most whites claimed to like Sawyer but only about 7 percent voted for him, and all the white council members who put him in office abandoned him for Daley.

When Sawyer was placed in power on Dec. 2, 1987, some white liberals fearfully saw a huge but peaceful protest outside the council chambers as a "mob." Then last year, in the single most damaging event to black-white relations, Sawyer vacillated about firing Steve Cokely, an aide given to anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. When Cokely was finally ousted, many blacks defended him or tried to excuse his statements. That incident heightened Jewish distrust of blacks, creating "the tidal change in that portion of the Chicago electorate that made liberalism possible," Rose argued. Shortly after the Cokely firing, black aldermen stormed the Art Institute of Chicago to remove an unflattering painting of Washington by a white student.

Black-white relations were further frayed during the campaign, as various black community and political leaders stridently declared that "race is the only issue" in the campaign, attacked Sawyer as "an Uncle Tom" and derided Daley as a "born-and-bred racist."

Strategy blackfires: Race and racism remain serious issues in the city. Daley's reluctance to talk about race—or even to speak out forcefully against the recent attempted beating of a black postal worker by whites in his neighborhood—does not mean he will be free of prejudice or responsive to black needs. But the attempt by many black leaders to mobilize blacks on the basis of race—even if done obliquely—and to attack opponents as racists increased the already elevated level of distrust.

During the campaign many Hispanics and whites from the Washington coalition saw blacks as arrogating exclusive power to determine the direction of the coalition. Non-black Washington allies also worried that blacks were denying the relevance or desirability of coalition politics. Even though Evans was one of the more moderate black voices and had spoken out early against Cokely, he was tarred with the strident comments of some supporters.

Wild paranoid theories about white conspiracies flourished, but black paranoia is well grounded in the long history of abuse of blacks by big city government, the police, the Chicago Housing Authority, the parks department and other institutions on the losing end of many lawsuits over the years. But whatever moral or historical grounds blacks might have for suspicion, many black "movement" leaders were strategically blind to what it took to build a coalition. It was unclear to many Washington voters what their movement was now either for or against—but many whites became convinced it was against them.

Evans won only 5 percent of the white vote, even doing worse than Sawyer in some northwest side, largely white wards and los-

Continued on page 22

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

LIKE A BIBLICAL SAGA, THE RECENTLY COMPLETED mayoral election here has inspired a host of varied interpretations. Pundits pushing wildly contrasting theories all point to Richard M. Daley's election as proof. However, there is widespread agreement that the campaign was not good for Rev. Jesse Jackson. This assessment may be popular, but it's wrong.

Although Timothy Evans was the actual losing candidate, many commentators concluded that Jackson was the biggest loser. He had an opportunity to remain above the fray—perhaps by devoting more attention to his flagging National Rainbow Coalition (NRC)—but Jackson waded directly into the city's political swamp. And, critics say, a list of failures chart his progress.

He first failed to forge a consensus of black leadership following the sudden 1987 death of Mayor Harold Washington, and the African American community consequently split its loyalties between Alderman Timothy Evans and Acting Mayor Eugene Sawyer. Jackson next failed to convince independent candidate Evans, running under the Harold Washington Party banner, to endorse Sawyer in the primary election.

Despite Jackson's efforts, Sawyer became the first incumbent black mayor to be ousted by a white challenger in his party primary. Not only did Jackson support two losers, the two-time Democratic candidate for president failed to support his own party's mayoral candidate.

Emerging stronger: "The press has continuously misrepresented what Rev. Jackson had tried to do," explains Frank Watkins, Jackson's longtime aide. "He was trying to hold Harold Washington's coalition together; the personalities involved were secondary concerns." Contrary to conventional wisdom, Watkins insists, Jackson has come out of the Chicago elections in a stronger position than when he entered.

If this assessment is confined to Jackson's status within his African-American core constituency, then Watkins is right. For example, this city's African-American community was bitterly divided between partisans of Sawyer and Evans, but Jackson remains popular among both camps. And on a national level, those many blacks who continuously urge Jackson to sever ties with the national Democrats and help form an independent party were gratified by his support for the Harold Washington Party.

"Many of us were looking at this Chicago election as perhaps the beginning of a new political movement that had the potential to spread around the country," said Bob Law, host of *Night Talk*, a nationally syndicated black-oriented radio talk show. Law says many African-American activists from around the country were watching the Chicago election—and the formation of the Harold Washington Party—for signs that black voters were ready for a new political alignment.

"As I talk to people of like mind across this nation, I find there is increasing sentiment for a rejection of the two-party system," Law says. "If Evans had won, believe me, the Harold Washington Party would soon have become a national phenomenon."

The "ABC policy": Although few of Jackson's ideological allies fault his stand against the Daley candidacy, he is getting some criticism for his racial loyalties. "According to my information, there initially was a white candidate [Alderman Larry Bloom] in the race who had a more progressive pos-



Some critics accused Jackson of "race-based" politics in his endorsements of Acting Mayor Eugene Sawyer and, later, Alderman Tim Evans.

His candidates lost, but Jackson won in Chicago

ition than both of the black candidates Jackson supported," notes an NRC organizer from Vermont. "I hesitate to make a judgment on the Chicago situation since I'm so far away. But I'm not the only one voicing these concerns, and Jesse should be aware that this

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sentiment is growing." Several Jackson supporters in Chicago also thought Bloom's candidacy best expressed the NRC philosophy, but his campaign failed to attract enough support in the city.

Others who have previously praised Jackson's attempts to cultivate an interracial coalition also are critical of what they say is his increasing reliance on race-based politics. *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry recently chided Jackson for seemingly adopting what he labeled an "ABC (Anything But a Caucasian) policy" in his refusal to endorse Democrat Daley.

"He was trying to hold Harold Washington's coalition together; the personalities involved were secondary concerns."

"Jackson's race-based decision is questionable in terms of the principles he has espoused," wrote Raspberry. "And in cold political terms, it is worse. It violates the law of pragmatism."

Questions of empowerment: Most NRC members are comfortable with Jackson's positions regarding race-based preferences. "I don't see what's so difficult to understand about Jesse's positions," says Jim Zogby, an NRC vice president. "African-

American empowerment is a fundamental component of the progressive agenda. It's not so much an issue of black vs. white as it is an issue of empowerment."

"Why is it so hard for many people to remember that African-Americans were victims of brutally racist oppression for much of this country's history?" Zogby asks. "It baffles me why some progressives don't understand just how important issues of empowerment are to the African-American community."

Zogby, who is also executive director of the Arab-American Institute, compares Jackson's stance to a similar dilemma facing the negotiators in the Mideast. "It's highly possible that Egypt, Jordan and Israel might sit down and come up with some very interesting ideas concerning the future of the Palestinians," he says. "But if the Palestinians are not empowered to determine their own destiny, all of those interesting ideas are irrelevant."

Those national commentators who criticized Jackson for supporting black candidates instead of white Democrat Daley are uninformed about Chicago's political context, according to Watkins. He says these critics should learn more about the city that is labeled America's most segregated before dismissing Jackson's empowerment strategies.

Reciprocity: "Most of those Democratic leaders who are now attacking him failed to support Harold Washington when he was the Democratic candidate in both 1983 and 1987," Watkins explains. "Daley also refused to endorse Jackson, or even offer an encouraging word, during both of his presidential campaigns." Despite that, he adds, Jackson twice supported Daley in his races for Cook County state's attorney.

Charges that Jackson's rainbow is too monochromatic are old and, despite considerable evidence to the contrary, may never fade. "Mainstream American politics is still

not too comfortable with assertive black males," notes Ron Daniels, former NRC executive director. "So whenever an African-American takes a strong stance for black empowerment, it raises the tension level among those who for so long have had a monopoly of power."

Jackson has campaigned across the country for candidates who are not African-Americans, "but the media doesn't think that kind of political activity is worthy of coverage." During the last few months, Jackson campaigned in support of Jerry Brown's successful bid for chairman of the California Democratic Party. He aided the campaign of Indiana Democrat Jill Long, who was recently elected to the U.S. House seat once held by Vice President Dan Quayle (see story on page 4). Jackson also provided support for Paul Soglin's winning race for the mayoral seat of Madison, Wis.

Independent route: Recent changes in the structure of Democratic leadership have further targeted Jackson for party ostracism. The selection of Ron Brown as chairman of the Democratic National Committee specifically has sharpened the criticism of Jackson within the party. With another African-American in a position of party leadership, Democratic operatives feel less need to mute their displeasure with Jackson's tactics.

This new tactic of official Jesse-bashing debuted before the Democratic Leadership Council's (DLC) conference last month, when Rep. William Lipinski (D-IL) vigorously, but vainly, urged DLC officials not to invite Jackson. Watkins predicts that those Democrats who advocate the DLC strategy of going after homesick "Reagan Democrats" will continue their attempts to isolate Jackson. The Chicago results will likely accelerate that trend, as national party leaders see Daley's win as a positive portent for the DLC approach.

On the other hand, African-American leaders around the country are applauding Jackson's step away from party orthodoxy in the Chicago race. "A lot of activists were wondering if Jesse's allegiance to the Democratic Party was becoming too restrictive or too blind," says *Night Talk*'s Law. "Now many of them are relieved." □



Champion International's giant paper mill on the Pigeon River in the Piedmont country of North Carolina.

By William K. Burke

CANTON, N.C.

THE RESIDENTS OF CANTON BUILT THEIR town around Champion International Corporation's paper mill. All of the nicer neighborhoods lie upstream of the 200-acre plant and the polluted water it pours into the Pigeon River. The paper-mill odor, like an outhouse full of rotten eggs, hangs over the company offices, union hall, library and town hall that squat before the mill gates to form the heart of Canton.

It doesn't bother the locals much. "It smells like money to us," says Carroll Israel, vice president of United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) Local 507.

The 1,600 plant workers represented by Local 507 average \$14 an hour tending the machines that produce the paper for 20 percent of the envelopes and 30 percent of the milk and orange juice cartons sold in the U.S. Now Champion and Local 507 have lost a struggle with their neighbors downstream in Cocke County, Tenn., and 1,000 mill hands will lose their jobs.

In December, pressure from the environmental activists of the Dead Pigeon River Council forced Tennessee Gov. Ned McWhorter to refuse Champion's request for a permit variance to violate Tennessee's water quality standards by continuing to allow its effluent to travel down the Pigeon to the Tennessee border, 40 miles below the mill. Champion announced in January it would probably shut down four of the mill's six papermaking machines to meet Tennessee standards.

This apparent conflict between a clean river and jobs has masked another story: the long-term tendency of American industry to update and consolidate operations and lay

An effluent community worries about cleaning its river and/or saving jobs

off union workers. The drama of neighbor against neighbor, the revelations of dioxin in Pigeon River fish and a cancer epidemic in a downstream community have thus masked the reality that jobs are not being sacrificed to a clean environment, but bartered for competitiveness.

Black water first flowed down the Pigeon River in 1908 when the mill opened. Fish learned to crowd the eddies of clear water where brooks and creeks from higher in the Appalachians joined the Pigeon. To this day local people know it's only worth fishing the Pigeon in those spots where fresh mountain water dilutes the main stream.

In 1912 Champion printed an article in the Newport, Tenn., *Plain Talk* promising that wastes from their chemical pulping process would soon be mostly recycled within the plant. The company kept that promise and has periodically updated its wastewater treatment facilities, spending more than \$24 million since 1960.

Foaming Pigeon: But the Pigeon is a small river; at its source above Canton it looks more like a mountain creek. In the summer the Pigeon's flow can dwindle to 50 million gallons a day. The mill has to pollute 45 million gallons a day to meet its production quota. At times Champion simply pours the entire river through the mill.

The mill's giant wastewater plant has upgraded the river from black to brown. Three generations of Cocke County residents have

forgotten that it once ran clear. Below the mill, North Carolinians took to wading their mules and dogs in the river to kill ticks and mites. Folks living along the Pigeon learned to accept the stench, the foul-tasting fish and the undervalued land along the banks.

Then in May 1985 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ruled that North Carolina's water discharge permit for the

LABOR

Canton mill was invalid because it would not force Champion to comply with either Tennessee or North Carolina water quality standards. Champion in North Carolina sued in federal district court to prevent the EPA from taking over the permitting process. But in December 1986 Judge David B. Sentelle ruled for the EPA. The people of Cocke County saw a chance to clean up their river.

At midnight on Dec. 31, 1986, about 100 Tennesseans gathered on a bridge over the Pigeon in Newport, Cocke County's seat, to form the Dead Pigeon River Council. They prayed, dropped flowers onto the river and vowed that "we will not rest until our river again runs clear."

The council didn't get much done at first. "The community was complacent. We've had an industrial sewer running through our town for 80 years. It's there. It stinks and we hold our noses, but we can't do anything about it," said Bobby Seay, a founder of the

council.

Then the buses came. Champion hired 52 of them to bring 4,000 millworkers, their families and supporters to a January 1988 hearing at the coliseum in Knoxville, Tenn., to hear the state of Tennessee's opinion of the EPA's draft discharge permit for the Canton mill.

Seay said that Oliver Blackwell, a mill executive, had agreed to prevent North Carolinians from attending the Knoxville hearing. "A suggestion was made, nobody agreed to anything," Blackwell countered. The 500 people who drove over from Newport to support the river cleanup were outnumbered 8-to-1 by Champion supporters wearing yellow hats that bore the slogan of the corporation's marketing campaign, "Don't let Champion fall."

Seay said Champion's attempt to overwhelm the Dead Pigeon River Council made the environmentalists local heroes. "They had their day in court in North Carolina, why take over ours and run over us that much more? All of a sudden it became a regional issue." East Tennessee dailies and TV newscasts started featuring the story. "It became David vs. Goliath," said Jerry Wilde, the Dead Pigeon River Council's president.

Many Champion supporters who rode the buses to Knoxville had been among the crowd that packed a similar hearing the previous week in Asheville, N.C., where 100 speakers told the Canton and Champion side

of the story to the EPA.

Champion said it would close the mill if forced to meet the draft permit. The mill provides nearly 2,000 jobs paying \$30,000 and up a year in a county where average per capita income is only about \$13,000.

The company had already planned a modernization to streamline production processes and reduce pollution from the chlorine used to bleach wood pulp for white paper. Champion used its political influence to convince the EPA that its plan was the only solution that would save jobs. The last two Canton mayors are former Champion employees, and North Carolina Gov. Jim Martin has backed all of Champion's decisions (Martin even stood at the North Carolina-Tennessee border and waved to the buses rolling to the Knoxville EPA hearing).

The color of money: Most paper-mill pollution is produced when lignin, a fiber that holds trees together, is washed out of wood pulp with chemicals. The dark organic sludge and sediment that results is laced with traces of many toxic and carcinogenic compounds. The main gauge for determining pollution in rivers and streams is a color unit (CU), a standard for measuring sediment in water.

Champion said it could reduce the river's color to 85 CUs just past the Tennessee state line, where three mountain streams dilute it. At 85, the river would be yellow-brown. Right now the Pigeon downstream from the mill ranges from the color of strong tea when the river runs high in winter to a thick, ugly, coffee color in summer. The EPA's draft permit would have required the mill's discharge water to not exceed 50 CUs.

To meet that standard Champion would have to use the ultrafiltration equipment it tested a few years ago. Plant manager Oliver Blackwell said it couldn't be done, because the ultrafiltration process produces a black tarry sludge. Rather than find a way to dispose of the sludge, the company would close the mill.

Blackwell was born and raised near Canton. He doesn't think the color issue is worth the loss of jobs. To prove his point, he placed a jar containing 85 CU mill wastewater next to a jar containing a 50 CU sample. The two liquids looked almost identical. "Is that 35 CU difference worth the broken dreams, the heartache, the pain caused to families?" he asked.

The EPA agreed with Blackwell. After the two public hearings, North Carolina, Tennessee and the EPA worked out a compromise on Champion's terms. In March 1988 the millworkers' jobs seemed safe.

Wilde tried to get his group to accept that proposal, but his rank and file overwhelmed him. "People were saying they'd rather [the river] stayed the way it was than accept a compromise," Wilde recalled. "A lot of them were saying, 'Whatever it takes, take a stick of dynamite and blow the mill up.'"

Downstream residents had just learned the river was not just ugly but possibly dangerous. Greenpeace had supplied the Dead Pigeon River Council with evidence that the chlorine bleaching process used at the mill created 2,3,7,8-TCDD, the most lethal form of dioxin. Present in barely detectable traces in the sediments that dye the river brown, it nevertheless accumulates in the fat tissue of higher animals.

Filletts from a trout taken along the Pigeon contained dioxin at 80 parts per trillion, three times the Food and Drug Administration's safe level for food items. Just after the announcement of the compromise permit,

Greenpeace posted signs along the riverbanks warning people not to eat fish from the Pigeon.

Residents of Hartford, Tenn., a riverfront cluster of houses four miles from the North Carolina line, call their hamlet "Widowville," because many of their neighbors, especially men who fish a lot, seem to die of cancer in middle age. The Dead Pigeon River Council listed 167 Hartford-area residents who had died of cancer in the last 20 years. During that time the average population of Hartford was 500.

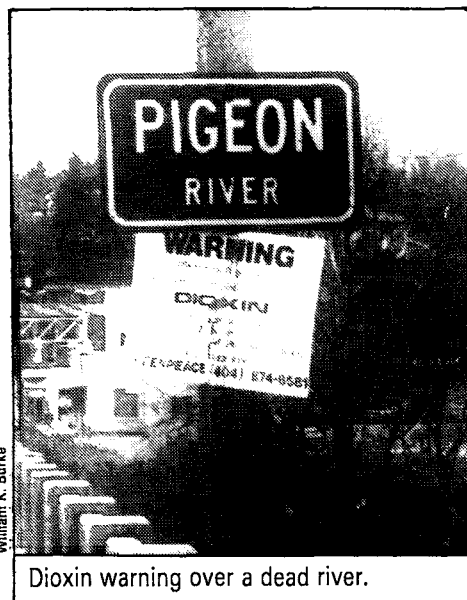
The council asked for research to validate their findings. A study by Tennessee's Department of Environmental Epidemiology found evidence only of "slightly elevated" cancer rates around Hartford. The Dead Pigeon River Council hopes to fund an in-depth study to confirm their suspicions. In the last year, its informal list of people who regularly ate Pigeon River fish or drank from nearby wells and died of cancer has grown to more than 200 names.

The governor agrees: Gay Webb, of the Dead Pigeon River Council, has a frozen buffalo carp he saved from the most recent EPA sample of river fish. The foot-long brown fish has sores along its belly and only a small indentation where one of its eyes should be. The EPA officially says that the sampling indicates that the level of dioxin present in Pigeon River fish poses no human health hazard.

Through the summer of 1988 the Dead Pigeon River Council pressured Gov. McWhorter to refuse the variance Champion needed to put the compromise permit in effect. "I told [McWhorter] if he approved the variance he didn't need to bother to campaign again in East Tennessee; he wouldn't get enough votes to make it worth his while," Wilde said. Last fall McWhorter took a raft trip down the Pigeon. Two days before Christmas he denied Champion's variance request.

For a month residents of Canton, egged on by North Carolina Gov. Martin's threat to retaliate against auto pollution from East Tennessee cities, blamed the neighboring state's environmentalists for the threat to their economy and waited for Champion's response.

When Champion announced January 25



Dioxin warning over a dead river.

that the Canton mill would be scaled down, the local newspaper didn't mention that, though the mill's payroll will be cut by about half over the next three years, it's daily papermaking capacity will drop by only about 100 tons to about 1,600 tons. The most modern sections of the mill will remain open and will be further automated to decrease labor costs.

In February 1988, Local 507 signed a concessionary contract at the same time it was spending thousands of dollars supporting the company in the pollution fight. The contract will cost the remaining Canton millworkers their premium pay for Sundays and holidays. The UPIU local at Jay, Maine, was locked out for 16 months when it struck over premium pay. Canton's local sent over \$100,000 to the Jay strikers but dared not resist the same corporate demands because of the battle over the river.

In the mountains above Canton, Champion dammed the Pigeon River to form Lake Logan, whose water keeps the paper mill

Whether the river runs filthy or jobs run dry, Champion keeps rolling along.

At one time, farmers waded their animals in the Pigeon River to kill ticks and mites.



operating during droughts. The lake is full of trout, and its shores are lined with cabins for Champion's elite. George Bush fished there a few years ago.

The executives who gather there to fish, relax and confer about the company's future can't be too upset with the way things have gone. Champion increased net profits by 95 percent in 1987, and sales were up 15 percent for the first quarter of 1988.

Despite reports it was bringing in BE&K, a Birmingham, Ala., construction and maintenance firm that specializes in union busting, to help refit the Canton mill, Champion has retained the loyalty of the Local 507. But it is a loyalty based largely on people's fears for their future. "If they shut this mill down tomorrow Champion would still be one of the biggest paper companies in the world," Israel says. It is unlikely any of them will find jobs near their present wages without leaving the mountains where most were born and raised. "I guess it was jobs vs. the environment, and the environment won," Israel adds.

Though it's clear that Israel's local is badly wounded, it's not at all certain the Pigeon River will run clear a day sooner than Champion International decides to let it. The EPA's new draft permit, released at the end of March, gives Champion three years to comply with Tennessee's standards. Also, the EPA will depend on Champion's willingness to police itself by adjusting the mill's pulp production to the river's seasonal flow. But just last summer mill managers chose to flush sewers that were emitting chlorine gas without bringing the company's own industrial hygienist to the scene. Two workmen needed hospital treatment for chlorine burns, but an observer said managers on the scene were only concerned that work resume quickly.

That attitude in the Canton mill is why the Dead Pigeon River Council doesn't believe any compromise between Champion and the EPA will work. Webb expects his group will fight the new permit in court. Recalling Champion's 1912 promise to clean up the Pigeon, Webb said, "This is just like 1912, but we're not going to wait around." □

William K. Burke writes frequently for *In These Times* on environmental issues.

By Kathie Klarreich

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

IN HAITI'S HARROWING HISTORY, A SUCCESSFUL government has usually been associated with a strong military. Those leaders without powerful army backing have quickly been deposed. The current Haitian president, Gen. Prosper Avril, is facing the same problem. Not only is he fighting for political stability, but he is desperately trying to fuse the gaps in a very splintered army.

The situation exploded on April 2. In the early hours of the morning, members of the Leopards, a special paramilitary force, stormed the national palace. Their leader, Col. Himmler Rebu, demanded Avril's deportation. Thanks to loyal members of the presidential guard, Avril was intercepted at the airport and returned to the national palace.

Throughout the day, various people were taken hostage by the Leopards. Among them were immediate members of Avril's family, as well as Minister of Interior Acadius St. Louis and his son. In turn, Rebu was taken prisoner at the national palace.

Negotiations followed, ending in the release of the Leopards' hostages. Avril, however, reneged on the deal and kept Rebu prisoner. The Leopards rebelled.

Following Avril's official announcement on Monday, April 3, in which he confirmed that he was back in control, the Leopards took to the streets. By 9 a.m. they had barricaded and occupied the national airport, later threatening to blow it up if Avril did not release Rebu. The Leopards were also responsible for roadblocks throughout the city and the closing of the national television station.

A brief confrontation between a presidential guard tank and the Leopards Monday afternoon left at least four Leopards dead and four more wounded. The Leopards retreated from the streets and shortly thereafter surrendered the airport to the presidential guard.

Early Tuesday morning the Ministry of Information announced that Rebu, along with his wife and four children; Col. Philippe Biamby, leader of the presidential guard; and Col. Leonce Coileau, leader of the army general staff, were all deported by land to the Dominican Republic.

Old plays network: "These officers have not been admitted to the U.S.," said a U.S. Embassy spokesperson. "They have, however, been issued American passports."

The mood in Port-au-Prince remained tense



Haiti's current strongman Gen. Prosper Avril has a Leopard by the tail.

It's *coup du jour* as Haiti's military regime devours itself

as *In These Times* went to press.

While there is little doubt that Rebu was the instigator of the coup, the specific reasons behind the action are not known. If, as some say, the deported officers are involved in drug trading, the coup may be a result of Avril's recent dismissal of four high-ranking military officers. There has been strong pressure by the U.S. to clean up the drug situation.

But the problem in the army runs deeper than mere drug involvement. Ever since the mysterious death last October of Col. Jean Claude Paul, commander of the Dessaline barracks, the level of distrust among army officers has increased. (Paul had been indicted by the U.S. on charges of drug trafficking.) "The coup attempt," said Bobby Duvall, founder of the Haitian League of Former Political Prisoners, "is expressive of the deep

crisis we are facing in the structure of the army."

There exist divisions not only between the various military branches but within the individual units as well. To further heighten the level of distrust, Avril recently created a new military watchdog division to specifically deal with the drug problems.

In addition, Avril has been busy filling vacated positions with officers loyal to the Duvalierist line. Avril himself had 30 years service under the Duvalier dynasty. Among those new positions filled are the chief of police, the head of the national guard and of the Leopards.

Forum for him: These appointments seemingly clash with recent moves to promote democratic reform. In February, Avril called for a national forum, in which the participants voted for an electoral board to

begin the process of democratic elections. The move, however, was controversial.

"The whole idea of a forum kills the transitory articles of the constitution," says Louis Dejoie, leader of PAIN, one of the large centrist political organizations. The 1987 constitution, accepted by 90 percent of the voters, clearly outlines the electoral process. "We, the democratic forces, refused to attend the forum because we knew that the people Avril involved would be Duvalierists. They would control the elections."

At the time there was a fear that article 291 of the constitution, which prohibits any Duvalierist from running for office for 10 years, would be deleted. Because Avril gained power through a coup d'état rather than legislative procedure, the constitution does not legally exist. Several weeks ago, however, Avril reinstated the constitution. While article 291 was included, 36 others were not. For many, the reinstating of the constitution was nothing more than an attempt to show efforts toward democratic reform in order to secure financial aid from the U.S.

The need for economic aid is real. The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has an average daily wage in the capital of less than \$3—in the provinces a pathetic 50 cents.

Avril aggravated the economic situation by recently closing several ports that are popular entry points for contraband. Smuggling has a long history in Haiti. Much is done by *Madames Sarahs*, women who travel throughout the Caribbean trading goods but paying no taxes to the government. Customs officers take a cut, and products flood the market at a cheaper price than those made locally. The real loss, however, comes from large contraband items, like cars.

"The government's move against people making money from contraband," said one government official, "is going to cause unrest and unhappiness."

The aborted coup was a response to unrest and unhappiness within the military. Without power, a strong leader, organization or resources, the Haitian people are obliged to express their discontent in other ways—road blocks, strikes, demonstrations. There seems to be little doubt that unless Avril makes some drastic changes both popular and military unrest will continue.

Kathie Klarreich writes regularly on the Caribbean.

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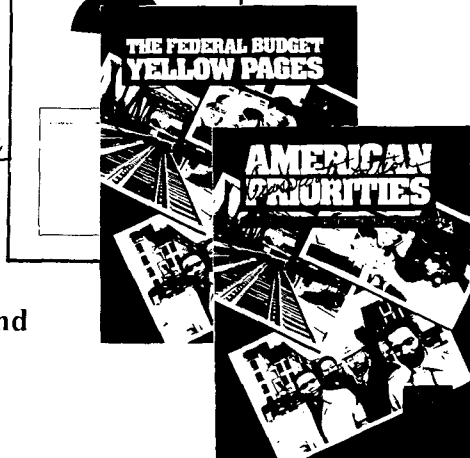
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AFTER EUROPHORIA, SOMETHING LIKE *Europanic* is in danger of setting in at the approach of the Single Market, to be put in place in the 12 countries of the European Community (EC) by the last day of 1992.

Last year, French Prime Minister Michel Rocard compared the new "Europe" to an airplane without a pilot. He is all for it, nevertheless, but as the motors warm up for takeoff, some of the passengers are getting uneasy.

It was Frenchman Jacques Delors who, as president of the European Commission, is credited with the 1985 decision to achieve, at long last, the EC's original goal of a common market. The Common Market was renamed the "single internal market," and a new method was found for getting there. A white paper was adopted, with some 300 measures for harmonizing taxes, regulations and standards. Decisions had to be taken on schedule by majority vote, rather than by the consensus that had blocked earlier unification efforts. And a deadline was set for Dec. 31, 1992. Once member states had ratified this agreement in July 1987, there was no turning back.

Especially in France, "1992" became a new rallying cry of national purpose and consensus. The media and political class exhorted France to get into a winning position for a glorious entrance into "Europe," and scolded other Europeans for not being as "European" as the French. "Europe" served as a new label for the "modernization" that has obsessed France's leaders since the postwar period. Moreover, in the mid-'80s, it suddenly appeared politically imperative in French eyes to "anchor" the Federal Republic of Germany to the West. The enthusiasm of the French political class for the European Community had a deep political motive.

But whatever the motive, the method was economic deregulation.

The ac/dc EC: In 1985, Wisse Dekker, the Dutch president of Philips, Europe's largest electronics manufacturer, wrote a discussion paper entitled "Europe 1990." The paper was approved by the Round Table of European Industrialists, including the bosses of Shell, Olivetti, FIAT, Siemens, Nixdorf, Daimler-Benz, AEG, Thyssen, Bosch and other giants. Their common interest was to get rid of all the differences of standards and regulations that raised production costs. A symbolic example are the 36 different plugs that Philips has to manufacture so that its appliances can be plugged into differently shaped wall sockets in the 12 EC countries.

The European multinational executives felt that the mass of different standards and taxes was preventing them from being able to use the large European market as a strong base for global competition with American and Japanese rivals. With their backing, Dekker's paper was adopted by the European Commission and served as basis for the white paper and its 300 measures.

At the same time, the Commission ordered a 6,000-page study on "the cost of non-Europe" to document in detail the costs of the obstacles to be cleared away and to forecast the benefits of 1992. Known as the Cecchini Report, after commission director Paolo Cecchini, the study in its various abridged versions has spread the word that the single internal market will lead to growth rates of 5 percent to 7 percent and create 2 million to 5 million new jobs (there are now 16 million registered unemployed in the 12 EC countries).

Will '92 be supernatural or just multinational?



UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher: screaming before hurting.

The Cecchini Report seems to be something of a best-case scenario, assuming that all EC governments will be able to encourage growth. Even so, it notes that "EC integration gives management a supply-side shock—a market-sent opportunity" to promote "new ways of organizing work," and that this "cer-

COMMON MARKET

tainly means that more people will have to change their jobs more frequently." In manufacturing, the Cecchini Report says that some 80 percent of cost savings will derive from restructuring, which involves "disappearance of the smallest or least efficient companies, or their concentration."

Initially, then, jobs will be lost. So will traditional safeguards. But labor, and most of the left, feel resigned to "Europe," if only because they have already run up against a stone wall called "the world market" in their own countries. Even the British labor movement, whose anti-continental chauvinism makes all the others look like fervent internationalists, has been coming around to "Europe," perhaps in the hope of diluting Thatcherism in a more socially progressive European solution.

But neither the left nor labor has yet found any way to get a handle on "Europe." The plane not only has no pilot; it even may not have a cockpit?

The only "European political class," a German Social Democrat observed recently, "is the bankers."

The workers national: The language barrier tends to reinforce the class barrier. Of all the social forces, the labor movement is at the greatest disadvantage. This is not only because people in the industrial working class rarely speak foreign languages. Each labor movement is deeply rooted in its own history and tends to consider that the benefits it has won from its historic struggles are vastly superior to those in other countries. Thus the German labor movement is worried at losing its rights to industrial co-management, which the French labor movement considers a mere sop compared to its own job security laws, which the British labor movement would never trade for the

closed shop—something no other labor movement wants. The most modest—like the Portuguese, who have nothing to lose—have no influence at all.

Therefore, while European industrialists were spelling out 300 precise proposals for unifying Europe to their own benefit, European labor has been unable to get together with any sort of common program. Labor opposition to European integration, such as that of the French Communist Party, is too politically isolated either to formulate demands on Europe beforehand or to channel discontent if things go wrong. Instead, a new nationalist far right is appearing in one EC country after another, positioning itself to exploit eventual discontent. Ecological parties provide a more acceptable protest vote.

Last June, following the white paper, the decision was taken that capital movement will be totally freed as of July 1, 1990. This means the unrestricted right of investment and other capital to flee from national taxation. This may well jeopardize any national economic policy by undercutting the tax base.

About this time, even Europe's most ardent champions began to worry that it was all a bit too one-sided. Once a left Gaullist and later a member of the French Socialist Party, Delors is basically one of those socially minded Christian Democrats with a profound belief in European unity. As president of the commission, he took up the multinationals' needs as the motor able to repower the long-stalled common market, convinced that unification of the market would stimulate political, social and cultural integration.

This is very far from happening. Last summer Delors himself began warning publicly that the economic measures must be balanced by some political guidance. Since the powers of the European Parliament are extremely limited, the most important EC decisions are taken by summit meetings or ministers' meetings of the member states. Delors pointed to this "democratic deficit" and suggested that national parliaments should pay more attention to the increasing number of important questions being settled at the ministers' council level. The consensus rule means any social measure can be

vetoed. Delors raised some of these problems at the European Trades Union Confederation meeting in Stockholm last July and at the British Trades Union Congress in Brighton in September.

Cruisin' for a Brugging: This inspired one of Margaret Thatcher's most famous tirades. In a major speech in Bruges, Belgium, the British prime minister responsible for abolishing democratic municipal government in Britain caviled that she had not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain only to see them reimposed at the European level, with a European superstate exercising a new domination from Brussels. Denouncing the "dangerous leftward drift" of European social democrats, Thatcher insulted Delors personally as the "French finance minister during the lunatic early years of the first Mitterrand administration." Thatcher claimed that "European unity is the device through which the regulators and socialists hope to expand their grip on the Continent."

True to her Hobbesian ideals, Thatcher abhors the notion of "social Europe." If Europe has to exist, it must be limited to an uninhibited free market accompanied by strong national police forces and a nuclear NATO closely allied to the U.S.—and nothing else. Alarm is growing on the Continent that she is getting her way.

In reality, the 300 measures leading to "1992" are deregulation measures. The Single Market is a vast deregulation operation. Thatcher should be happy. But her speech followed the tried-and-true rule of blackmail bargaining, "Always scream before you are hurt." This is Thatcher's usual method for dealing with "the Continent," and she can usually count on a chorus of the world's vilest tabloid newspapers to accompany her harangues.

Employing the same technique, the *Wall Street Journal* led a rising chorus in the U.S. against the "protectionism" of "Fortress Europe." Using the media to whip up home-front chauvinism against "unfair" foreign traders is a weapon that only the British and the Americans seem to possess, and they do not shrink from using it.

In reality, the Single Market should be a good thing for big multinationals and financial institutions—all of them, whether European or non-European. American and Japanese multinationals are already helping themselves to subsidiaries so as to enjoy the benefits of 1992. Some American commentators pretend to be horrified by the EC demand (still very vague) for "reciprocity," that is, for the same freedom of operation for their subsidiaries in the U.S. that the Single Market will offer to American companies. Again, the big operators have nothing to fear; on the contrary, an American banker installed in any town in Portugal will be able to open branches from Dublin to Hamburg with more ease than a Washington banker can cross the Potomac into Virginia. Some even hope the EC example will promote further deregulation in the States.

The problems will be for the little businesses, for consumer protection, for the environment, for employees of the companies forced out of business, and for social programs whose tax base moves away. The massive deregulation is going to cause problems that will demand solutions. But where can the solutions be applied? This is the problem of "democratic deficit" that is worrying Europe's socialists as they prepare for the third elections to the European Parliament next June. □

Next week: Alain Minc presses the panic button.



Isabel Allende

to detail and penchant for colorful anecdotes made her feature stories, weekly column and TV show immensely popular in Chile. But popularity in the Chile of 1973, particularly for a niece of democratically elected President Salvador Allende, whose government was being subverted by a CIA-orchestrated coup, proved ephemeral. In 1975, along with her husband and two children (Paula, age 12, and Nicolas, age 7), Allende moved to Venezuela. Unable to find work as a journalist, she took an assortment of odd jobs.

"For many years I was just paralyzed," she says, "which is a very common feeling among exiles. When you lose your roots, somehow you don't nourish yourself. You block yourself to the world. You don't want to belong to that new place and are always looking back to the place you left, thinking that you'll go back.... And it doesn't happen that way."

Exiles on Pain Street: The often-exiled Guatemalan poet, Otto René Castillo, who was ultimately burned at the stake by the national guard, once wrote: "*Mi exilio era de llanto*" (My exile was made of weeping). For Allende, exile brought not only tears, but also writer's block. On Jan. 8, 1981, however, when she received a phone call from Chile saying that her grandfather was dying, she suddenly began to write again.

"I started to write a letter," she says. "I was not thinking of publishing it. I was not thinking that I was writing a novel. It was just that absolute necessity of survival—I *had* to write, because if I didn't I would die. And I wrote about the things I cared for, or the things that I missed the most. That was the main impulse to write *The House of the Spirits*—nostalgia, homesickness, the need to recover a lost world, a past that was gone forever. I felt that my memory was blurred, and by writing I could bring back all that I had lost and that way have it with me again."

"I started writing in a very automatic way with no previous structure, not thinking where I was going or what I was doing or what I wanted to say. I knew I wanted to tell about the military coup."

Given the circumstances under which Allende wrote *The House of the Spirits*, it's amazing she ever completed it. Her family was having severe financial problems, and she was working 12 hours a day in a school. Yet every night, after she had showered and eaten dinner, she sat at the dining room table and wrote; after a year she had a 500-page manuscript, which she showed to her mother who was visiting from Chile.

"My mother was very critical," Allende says. "We have a wonderful relationship, a very nourishing relationship. Nobody had ever seen me as a novelist. It didn't look like a novel, anyhow. My mother helped me with parts of it.... We edited it together."

Avoiding the eraser: When the book was published, it became a critically acclaimed bestseller in the U.S. and Europe. Although it was initially banned in Chile, it circulated in photocopies until the Pinochet government, intent on polishing its image, lifted its censorship on books. Though happy the

By David Volpendesta

A MONTH BEFORE HE DIED IN 1973, Nobel Prize-winning poet Pablo Neruda called a young journalist at Santiago, Chile's *Paula Magazine*. Her subsequent excitement created a flurry in the newsroom. "Me!" she exclaimed to her colleagues. "The Nobel Prize wants me.... I must be the best journalist in this country. And he wants me to interview him."

As she recently recalled the details of her "interview" with Neruda, Isabel Allende slipped off her shoes and put her feet on the living room sofa of her home in San Rafael, Calif. In a mocking but gentle aside, she chided herself for the ego of her journalistic youth.

Neruda, it seems, was enchanted with Allende's weekly humor column. Many people had told her that the poet would photocopy her pieces and send them to friends. As a child Allende had met the

poet ("dressed like a poet with a black cape and a black hat") at one of the weekly salons her grandmother held in her home for Chilean painters, intellectuals and writers.

So, armed with her tape recorder and a buoyant mood, Allende traveled the hour and a half between her office and the poet's home in Isla Negra. Her gracious host served her lunch and showed her his treasured collection of seashells and bottles. But at 2 p.m., when she indicated that she was ready to begin the interview, the poet was perplexed.

"Which interview?" he asked.

"The interview," Allende responded.

"My child," he blushed, "I would never allow you to interview me. You are the worst journalist in this country. You can never be objective. You always put yourself in the middle of a story. Why don't you just change to literature, because all those faults in journalism are virtues in literature?"

Although at the time Allende couldn't accept Neruda's judgment, he intuited what would prove to be an important literary career, launched by the publication of Allende's internationally acclaimed novel *The House of the Spirits*, and followed with *Of Love and Shadows* and, most recently, *Eva Luna*. Her approach to journalism was unconventional: she didn't merely try to dream up a new spin on a story; instead she threw herself into it and was willing to take the chance of being spun around herself.

Spinning the New Journalism: For example, she was once assigned a feature on Chilean prostitutes. Instead of simply taking to the streets and gathering quotes from the women she was writing about and telephoning the requisite university sociologists and vice-squad officials to solicit their "expert" opinions, Allende went to live in the red-light district, posing as a prostitute.

Her flair for the dramatic, attention

book is now available in her native country, Allende laments that books are so expensive there that only the elite can afford them.

Recently, on her first trip back to Chile since 1975, she met Chileans who were inspired by her books. "I had a lot of feedback," she says, "the feeling that a lot of people had read these books for other reasons than literary purposes. It was part of their history being erased or prohibited, part of their feelings that had been denied."

The inward, emotional life is as woven into the textures of Allende's writing as is her ability to evoke a sensorial panorama around characters and objects. Scrupulously attentive to the emotional power of nuance and detail, she seems to effortlessly understand what she's writing about.

Work details: One key to Allende's work is her disciplined creative process. When she's working on a book, Allende rises at 6:30 a.m., puts on her makeup and dresses, in her words, "as though I were going to a cocktail party." She also takes her purse with her when she goes to write in her study "because if I don't do that I don't have the feeling I'm going to work. I have the feeling that I'm in a hobby or something." For the next seven hours she does nothing but write.

She keeps the obsessive component of her creative process from becoming self-indulgent by staying attuned to loved ones and observing the machinations of sociopolitical oppression. In each of her books there are characters who embody her social consciousness. The characters she seems most enamored of are the social outcasts.

"I'm always very distrustful of authority. I'm against the rules, and I'm always trying to bend the rules. And in a way maybe these marginal characters, these people who stand unsheltered by the system, have to find their own ways for survival. And that makes them very genuine, very strong and very honest, because they have no protection from the system.

"And that's why I love them so much. In all my books, it's the prostitute or a homosexual or a priest or a transvestite or a thief or a guerrilla—people who are outsiders—who are the saviors. And usually the main characters become main characters because even though they are all under this big umbrella of the system, at a certain point in their lives they have to step out. Then they become the main character."

Allende's sympathy for society's marginal members and her intolerance of injustice gave her the initial impetus to begin her second novel, *Of Love and Shadows*, which she said was written out of "anger and pain" and based upon the massacre of members of several peasant families committed by the Pinochet government in 1973.

The women of the Maurella family searched for their loved ones for five years before the remains were found in a cave in 1978. The Maurellas became an almost tangible presence in Allende's imagination as she followed the story in the Caracas papers. "I was obsessed with the women of the family," she says. "I heard their voices constantly. I was driving the car, and all of a sudden I

would feel. I would start sweating, just like when you put on the brakes and you have this adrenalin coming all over your body. That sensation. Because I heard the voices. I dreamt a lot about them."

Beyond anger: Allende knew that her dreams of a horrific crime had to be translated into literary reality. "I wanted to denounce this crime," she says. "I was angry and furious, the impunity of the murders, all the abuse, everything that happened."

"And in the process of writing the book, it became a love story, because I realized it was not a horror story. The crime was terrible, but around that terrible event there was a lot of love: love of the families who looked for their men, love for freedom and the truth of the people who risked their lives to bring out the news, many ways of solidarity, of friendship, incredible acts of courage.... I realized that I couldn't afford my anger, because people who had suffered directly didn't have that anger. They were forgiving, and they were loving. So I was cured of my anger."

The transformation of her anger amplified her inner facilities of perception. Confessing that like her grand-

mother and mother she has always been psychic, and that many strange, inexplicable things have happened to her in her life, Allende recently discovered that many of the incidents she thought she had invented in *Of Love and Shadows* had actually occurred almost exactly as she described them.

Perhaps the eeriest revolves around the discovery of the decomposed body of a "disappeared" person named Evangelina Ranquileo in the Los Riscos Mine by the book's two main characters, Irene and Francisco. Aware that if they advised the authorities of their discovery they will also be disappeared, Irene and Francisco entrust their secret to Francisco's brother, José, a priest and political activist who lives among the poor. Given photographs Francisco had taken in the mine as proof of the massacre, José brings them to the cardinal, who is an opponent of the government. When the cardinal inquires how the photographs came to be in José's possession, the priest says it is a secret of the confessional.

Allende maintains that when she wrote it, the scene was pure invention. But on her recent trip back to Chile, she met a man who had been a priest until 1979. He told her that when he read the novel he was amazed at some of the information in it. Not only had he received confession from a man who had provided him with proof of the government atrocities Allende described, but all the information was known only to him and the cardinal.

"Days later somebody else came with another, similar story that was also in the book," Allende said. "Then I realized that it is as if all of a sudden

your mind is plugged into certain things, and the information flows in a very mysterious way.... In a way, you become a medium for things that are in the air."

Contours of personality: Allende maintains that she writes "with the best of my feminine faculties: intuition, instinct, emotion, imagination."

Characteristically open, Allende is quite clear about where the contours of her personality overlap with those of her characters. "With Eva Luna I had a very strange experience," she says. "I wanted to write about being a woman and being a writer.... I have accepted myself as a woman late in my life. I always wanted to be a man. It's a lot easier to be a man. A woman has to make double the effort to get half the recognition."

"I decided that not only was I glad to be a woman, but I was glad to be myself.... I want to be myself for the first time in 46 years.... Eva Luna is a person who, since she was born, loves herself. She accepts herself. She's absolutely woman. She accepts her sensuality, her sentimentality, her instincts, her intuition. She's somehow harmonious, integrated. Everything in her works simultaneously."

"Maybe I could have written about

myself. I could have written an autobiography about what my life has been. But I cannot do that, because I don't think I'm an interesting character. And I don't like to be so close to the character. I chose someone who would be absolutely different from myself. She's an orphan, illiterate, from a very poor background. She's part-Indian, part-black, part-white. She doesn't have anything. I come from a very protected environment, from an upper-middle-class family. I received everything. I had culture. I had languages. I had trips."

Despite the differences between the character and the author, when Allende finished the novel she realized that not only had she given Eva Luna her voice, but "in a very camouflaged way my autobiography and all the thing that I had wanted to say." Moreover, she admits that because of an emotional resemblance, she feels very close to the character.

"She's naive, but I'm not naive," Allende added. "I'm not cynical, but I'm not naive. She has a naive approach to life, which is very fresh. I don't have it, because I've had too much pain, too many failures in my life."

The never-ending story: Eva Luna, a modern-day Scheherazade, has her origins in a very rich period of Allende's life, that portion of her childhood spent in Lebanon. Taken there by her stepfather, who was a diplomat, she distinctly recalls her escapades around the book that "marked my childhood," *A Thousand and One Nights*.

"My stepfather had the four volumes hidden in a closet because it was supposed to be erotic, and young girls

couldn't read that sort of thing," she laughed. "Whenever he went out, I'd sneak in and read the stories. I would only read fragments, because I was so afraid that he would come back. I never finished a story. That made it even more fascinating, because the stories would just come alive. All the time you would have a different story, because you would put this fragment together with a lot of fragments, and then you'd have an edited story, a never-ending book."

On one level, the character of Eva Luna is the symbolic embodiment of what had been forbidden in the author's youth. But Eva Luna is also an image of transformation actualized by women's acquisition of the power of language, the power to articulate that which is forbidden.

Eva Luna can be read as a reinterpretation of the mythic paradigm of male/female relationships. In this context, the forbidden fruit that Eva Luna offers is the knowledge of power of language in its lunar connotations and denotations. The men in the novel who integrate these aspects of their personalities emerge as heroes.

Allende excels at melding such lofty themes with the everyday emotionalism of soap operas, producing works of art that amplify their latent significance. Indeed, it might seem that Allende's own tale has some telling similarities to the soaps. The long-suffering author has achieved international success and recently moved to suburban Marin County near San Francisco, a locale often associated with the self-indulgent, hedonistic California lifestyle. Has she become the triumphant underdog in her own soap opera, someone no longer able to define her destiny because she is defined by her status and the objects of the material world?

When the question is put to Allende, she smiles, then grows serious. "I can leave everything behind, close the door and never remember again," she said. "When I left Chile, I left with a small suitcase. I don't have any love for objects.... I can get rid of them in one minute with no regrets."

Given her imaginative resources, perhaps the only material objects she really needs are the tools of the trade she uses to fashion the alphabet into stories that sparkle with clarity. Yet even that joy can be ephemeral for the author. "Writing is a solitary pursuit," she says. "The book leaves, and then it doesn't belong to you anymore."

What Allende retains, however, is a steady contact with the spirit that animates her characters. No doubt, when she was a young journalist Pablo Neruda's refusal to grant her an interview cost her an important story. But in a roundabout way, it may have helped nudge her toward bigger things. Instead of a nice little story about a big-time poet, she has come to write big-time stories about the little people who are often disappeared from the margins of history. And any way you look at it, that's a good assignment. ■

David Volpendersta, co-editor of both a collection of Central American short stories, *Clamor of Innocence* (City Lights), and the forthcoming *Homeless, Not Helpless* (Canterbury Press), is currently co-producing a record of San Francisco's foremost political poets.

Chilean writer Isabel Allende works her magic from the inside out.

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by the Institute for Public Affairs, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657, (312) 472-5700.

Member: Alternative Press Syndicate

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This issue (Vol. 13, No. 20) published April 12, 1989, for newsstand sales April 12-18, 1989.

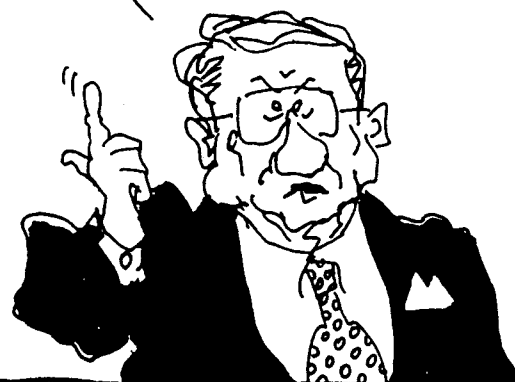
SURE, WE'VE HAD SOME FAILURES—
IN SHIP DESIGN...



... PERSONNEL, CLEANUP PLANS, AND
RESPONSE TIME



BUT LET'S NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE
SUCCESSSES—



OIL PRICES ARE
LOOKING UP!



WASSERMAN
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Today's robber barons despoil the environment

The March 24 Alaska oil spill is an ecological and human catastrophe. The largest spill ever in the United States, it is the second major oil mishap since December, when 300,000 gallons were accidentally spilled into Gray's Harbor, Washington. And because the tanker *Exxon Valdez* ran aground in a protected harbor, it may well cause more enduring damage to wildlife and human livelihood than any previous industrial accident in American history.

Some 150,000 of Prince William Sound's 250,000 square miles are now covered with crude oil that is expected to take an unprecedented toll in fish, marine mammals, birds and land animals. An unknown number of the 15,000 sea otters in the area have already frozen or drowned. Thousands of contaminated ducks, loons, cormorants and grebes have also died, and countless other birds and millions of newly hatched herring and salmon are at risk. This is an area through which millions of migrating birds of 181 species will pass in the next few weeks, and in which 5,000 bald eagles—the largest remaining group of these birds in the world—are concentrated. By feasting on the oil-soaked carcasses of shore birds, thereby coating their intestines with oil so that they can no longer absorb water or nutrients, the eagles may have doomed themselves to dehydration and starvation.

And the people of Valdez and the surrounding area are also suffering. It's not just that the natural beauty of the area has been defiled, but also that the livelihoods of herring, salmon, shrimp and king crab fishermen are severely threatened for an unknown number of years.

Exxon's safety net: But for Exxon, the country's second-largest corporation—after General Motors—the spill is nothing more than an embarrassment. Wall Street views Exxon's handling of the accident simply as an aberration, as reflected in the fact that since the oil spill its stock—in the words of the *New York Times*—has "barely fluttered." One reason for this is that under the law that established the Alaska pipeline, Exxon's liability would be limited to \$100 million, and that this would be reduced to \$14 million by an industry-wide fund set up to protect participating companies.

Wall Street, of course, is concerned only with the bottom line, and Exxon's cash flow is such that no one there expects even very high liabilities to hurt the company, which last year had a profit of \$5.3 billion. (There could be higher liabilities if the company is found to have been criminally negligent, but Exxon's profits are so high that even an award of \$500 million could easily be absorbed.)

In the light of these gigantic profits, you might think that the company would have been willing to guarantee that all possible precautions were taken to protect against an accident such as the one at Valdez. If so, you would be dead wrong. True, as far back as the '70s—and as recently as a month ago—Exxon and the other companies that own the Alaska pipeline assured environmentalists that they had a cleanup plan that could contain a major spill within five hours of a rupture. But in 1981 the industry disbanded a 20-member emergency team prepared for round-the-clock responses to oil spills in the Valdez Harbor and sound, and after that it allowed maintenance on cleanup equipment to lapse. And in 1985-86, in a move to save a few dollars, Exxon retired nine of its oil-spill experts, including the corporation's senior environmental officer. In those years, of course, administration policy followed industry in insisting that concern for the environment was an unnecessary luxury—that it was not cost-effective—so federal ship safety programs were also hampered by cutbacks in the Coast Guard budget.

These policies of neglect coalesced with the *Exxon Valdez* disaster. The Coast Guard stopped following the ship on radar, alleging at first that it was out of range. Exxon's cleanup equipment was totally inadequate, giving the leaking oil two full days to spread before anything significant was done. When the cleanup finally got under way, the situation was out of control. And now, while Exxon spends a few dollars on a public relations campaign to clean up its image, the American people will pay the high costs to clean up Valdez and the surrounding area.

Primitive accumulation revisited: In the early years of capitalism, capital was often accumulated through piracy, the forcing of peasants off their land and other methods of despoilation. Now, in our advanced stage of corporate capitalism, the environment is despoiled in order to maintain profits at a high level. This is seen by conservative economists as cost-free. But the costs are great in two ways. First, the dollar costs of cleaning up after accidents and other forms of chemical and nuclear pollution are increasingly high, and they are borne by the public, not by the polluters. Second, the cost both to the environment and to human health and well-being are enormous and, in many cases, irreversible.

There is something profoundly wrong with a society that accepts corporate values—in which the bottom line is the only one that counts—as the guiding tenets of its public policy. For the American people to continue subsidizing the destruction of our environment, and ultimately our own health and safety, merely to insure that the Exxons of this world can continue to enjoy billions of dollars in profit makes little sense. To have a government that does everything in its power to protect these corporations, while giving only lip service to environmental protection, makes even less sense.

LETTERS

No clash

SM. MILLER'S ARTICLE (ITT, MARCH 15) ATTRIBUTES the left's problems to the clash between protection of jobs and the environment, between production and consumption.

It seems to me that there is no clash. If we protected the environment there would be enough work for full employment. Millions could get jobs inspecting the workplaces, and repairing and renewing bridges and other infrastructures. One study projected the possible employment of 7 million to 10 million in the food industry if organic, non-polluting farming on slightly smaller farms were to be favored by the government. A few million more could work in supplying electricity if solar power were favored over nuclear.

Unfortunately, Environmentalists for Full Employment went out of existence a few years ago. Since then it has been very difficult to learn the numbers of workers needed to protect or clean up the environment.

To win, the left needs to show that full employment can be achieved without inflation, and that full employment is needed to protect the environment. It also must demonstrate how to ensure that every person's natural right to take part in the world's work can be exercised.

Faith Rich
Chicago

Superficial distinction

SM. MILLER ADVISES US (ITT, MARCH 15) TO ACCEPT the reality of a "mixed society," with inherent conflicts between production- and consumption-oriented reform movements.

The distinction is belabored, and superficial as well. Aren't production and consumption both products of the same income-creation system geared to profit-maximizing? At bottom there is no trade-off; what we produce and how we produce it cannot be divorced from our modes of living and the consumption alternatives we face. Miller's criticism that today's left does "not envisage the possibilities of large-scale transformation of society" can be turned against himself: only programs that deal with production and consumption as parts of a unified social whole can be non-piecemeal, consistent and long-run in character.

The shallowness of Miller's analysis is underscored by his scolding of the left for its "unwillingness to look at the Reagan record" of "remarkable economic gains in growth, employment and low inflation." What kind of time perspective can Miller be talking about? Economic growth—advances in real gross national product—averaged a shade less than 2.9 percent per year from 1980 through 1988. This is anything but robust in historical terms (even recent ones), and it would have been even lower had 1980 not been a recession year (the average for 1979-80 through 1987-88 was 2.6 percent).

Gains in employment? Seventeen million new jobs were created from 1980 through 1988, the same number created from 1972 through 1980. And under Reagan, unemployment averaged 7.5 percent, against 6.6 percent in the eight years preceding him.

Low inflation? It is extraordinary that anyone claiming to be part of today's left should fail to link the "victory" over double-digit inflation to the "despicable treatment of many"

(Miller's own cryptic—and seemingly begrudging—criticism of Reagan policies). It's no trick to beat down the inflation rate by throwing millions of people out of work, as Reagan and former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker did in 1981-82, when unemployment reached its postwar peak of 10.8 percent. As Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Franco Modigliani has shown, the unemployment was responsible for about 70 percent of the decline in the inflation rate. Sheer luck—the crumbling of OPEC and the drop in energy prices—accounted for the rest.

Nobody will deny that there is a widespread impression that the '80s have been "better" than the '70s. This, however, should raise serious questions about media happy talk and Democratic Party ineffectiveness. And it must be coupled with another widespread impression that shows up in all polls—that the future will bring less economic security and greater pressure on living standards.

Richard B. Du Boff
Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Tainted lunch

INOTE WITH DISGUST, IN THE INTERVIEW WITH JIM Hightower (ITT, Feb. 15) the promotion once again of Jesse Jackson as the progressives' hero of the hour. During the election I was as dismayed as anyone at Gov. Michael Dukakis' inability to combat what looked suspiciously like a CIA-engineered disinformation campaign similar to those that brought down Salvador Allende in Chile, Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala and Mohammed Mosaddegh in Iran. However, I am equally dismayed by the "kick-the-man-when-he's-down" commentary on Dukakis you so eagerly print.

Here's a reference exercise: look up the biographies of the 1988 candidates in *Who's Who*. Take a good look also at Jesse Jackson's—self-written, as are all *Who's Who* biographies. Among other things, his biography lists every honorary degree he has ever received, including one from Oral Roberts University. Would the good socialists and leftists out there care to tell me if they would list such a thing in their biographies? More to the point, would they even accept such an "honor"?

And did it not nauseate the American left even a little bit to see Jackson sit down to lunch with George Bush after the election, and smilingly accept the disingenuous statement that the Willie Horton ads were not racist? Grow up, boys and girls; Michael Dukakis failed himself more than us. He knows it, and he and his family have suffered for it. Jackson, of course, will not do the same. He's too busy allowing Bush to

treat him as titular head of the "loyal opposition" and thus make serious mischief for the Democratic Party. Or perhaps you think Bush, and Jackson, are doing that for the good of the progressive movement.

Ann C. Davidson
Philadelphia

Logic vs. usage

WHY DO YOU CONTINUE TO IMITATE YOUR MAINSTREAM counterparts by referring to riots, looting, etc., as "anarchy"? This slanderous misuse of the word "anarchy" occurred recently in Merrill Collett's article, "Debt bomb explodes in 'rich' Venezuela" (ITT, March 15).

The fact that dictionaries include "chaos" and "disorder" among their definitions of the term is no excuse for its use by intelligent writers; dictionaries sometimes reflect the popular, often malevolent usage of the language that evolves over the years. Etymologically, the word "anarchy" is a Greek derivation that simply means "no government" or "no ruler"; it cannot logically or fairly be used to describe the resulting conditions of a stateless society. In earlier times people who had known nothing but monarchy saw the same sinister connotation in "democracy" that "anarchy" has today. Realize, too, that abolitionists in a slave state must have appeared as absurd and irrational as anarchists do to the majority of the population today. To refuse even to consider the positive possibilities of an anarchistic society is to be as narrow-minded as religious fundamentalists who refuse to recognize the advantages of intellectual freedom.

So how about giving us anarchists a break? As long as you continue to equate our philosophy with terrorism, you are scarcely better than the reactionaries who synonymize communism with slavery.

Al Medwin
Farmingdale, N.J.

Editor's note: Collett's use of "anarchy" denoted chaos, not terrorism.

Non-persons

THE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE OF ABORTION IS PERCEIVED as a balance between women's right of sovereignty over their own persons and the duty of government to protect the life of a fetus. In *Roe vs. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision of 1973, a woman was allowed to choose abortion only during the first six months of pregnancy, because the fetus in the final three months is deemed potentially viable outside its mother—protected from the threat of abortion as a citizen in its own right.

But this balance of interests is unneces-

sary. The 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution recognizes as citizens only those persons born or naturalized in the U.S. In this clear and unambiguous description a fetus—however far in its development—is a non-person. It may be able to survive if prematurely thrust into the world during the latter part of its gestation, but until it is taking oxygen into its own lungs and nourishment into its own mouth, it is not a separate being. Until it is born, a fetus is in every sense a part of the woman carrying it.

Roe vs. Wade is correct in recognizing the woman's right to decide whether or not to continue her own pregnancy. But it is mistaken to balance that right with the government's interest in the fetus as a potential citizen. Until it is born, the fetus has no legal rights apart from those of the woman carrying it. To force a woman to bear a child against her will is a barbaric form of involuntary servitude, prohibited by the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Yet however faulty *Roe vs. Wade* may be, it remains the only protection of a woman's right to choose abortion during the first six months of pregnancy. To reverse the decision without providing stronger protections would be disastrous to women's rights as free citizens. To replace the *Roe vs. Wade* decision with one asserting that the fetus is a unique citizen from the moment of conception would be disastrous as well to the progress of individual liberty begun in the U.S. by the first drafting of the Constitution.

Such a decision would be based on narrow religious beliefs, as it is eagerly lobbied for by fundamentalist Christians and authoritarian Catholics. It would therefore oppose the First Amendment of the Constitution prohibiting the establishment of any religion by Congress. Such a decision or, worse yet, a "life amendment" would oppose the personal security guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment.

If the rights of pregnant women are to be protected, *Roe vs. Wade* cannot be overturned, unless by a decision more fully protecting women's rights.

Eric Rosenbloom
Micanopy, Fla.

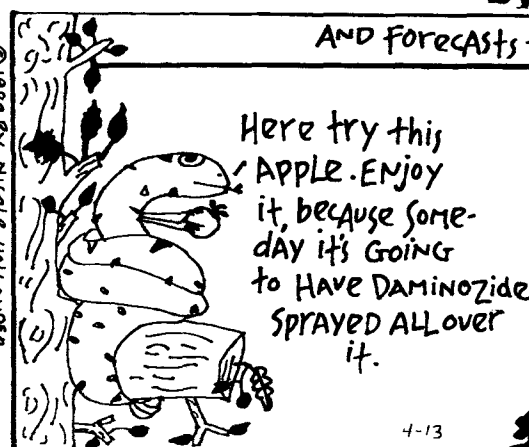
Atheist bites dog

AS A BOURGEOIS SOCIALIST AND ABORTIONISTIC Atheist I was outraged at the cardocrinum polygonums [sic] of Thomas J. Kuna-Jacob.

After reading his letter (Letters, March 22), I thrashed my children and bit my dog. You will soon be hearing from my attorney.

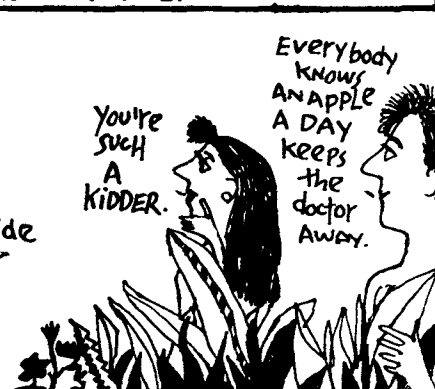
John Hook
Bothell, Wash.

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander

AND forecasts the Future.



Chile's fruit workers also suffer from tainted produce

By James Petras

THE RECENT SPATE OF PUBLICITY AND public concern about the poisoning of Chilean fruit ignored the impact of the poison on the Chileans who work in the industry and the conditions under which Chilean fruit is picked and packed.

Chilean fruit laborers work under abominable conditions. They earn on the average between \$2.85 and \$4 for a 12-hour day. And they are only temporary workers, employed for three months of the year. The other nine months they are unemployed. More than 60 percent of the farmworkers are women, who are transported in overcrowded trucks (up to 100 packed together) and sleep on the ground or in make-shift barracks without bedding, bathrooms or potable water. The other source of labor is child workers, some as young as nine years old. Armed guards ensure that labor is productive, that any slowdowns due to tiredness are appropriately punished. Wage deductions or outright firings are commonplace.

Among the bitterest complaints of the women workers are the horrible rashes and skin diseases that have afflicted them as a result of the prevalent use of pesticides.

The conditions of Chile's rural labor force were always difficult, but the situation has sharply deteriorated. Until the '60s, most Chilean farmworkers were tenant farmers on large estates. In exchange for labor services to the landlords they received a small house, year-round employment and a small plot of land to raise a few chickens and plant a few rows of vegetables for their own consumption.

During the '60s and early '70s, Christian Democratic and Socialist governments, elected with the support of the peasantry, carried out a far-reaching land distribution program that provided the vast majority of the peasants with land, credit and social services to improve production and income levels. With the advent of the Pinochet dictatorship in 1973, over 80 percent of the peasants were dispossessed, and the land was turned over to agribusiness supporters

of the military regime. Under the new system the peasants have neither the security of the previous landlord system nor the land from the reform period. The new export-promoting regime turned them off the land and hired seasonal laborers through labor contractors.

Only 30,000 Chilean farmworkers out of 450,000 are unionized, because the labor laws under the Pinochet dictatorship permit unionization for workers only after two years of employment—almost impossible to attain since most workers are employed less than two months on any farm. As a result, in 1988 there were over 200 spontaneous work stoppages protesting the indiscriminate use of pesticides, low wages and exhausting working conditions. The strikers demanded the right to collective bargaining. Thousands of workers were fired and blacklisted without any indemnification under article 15 of the Chilean labor code.

Recent efforts by human rights groups, church organizations and labor unions to negotiate social contracts with employers have been rejected. In December the National Peasant Confederation—the principal farmworker organization—demanded \$7 for an eight-hour day, adequate housing and job safety requirements in handling pesticides. The demands were rejected out

of hand, and those making them were fired. In January the bishop of San Felipe, Camilo Vial, inaugurated a "House of the Seasonal Worker," providing a social and cultural center for more than 1,000 farmworkers on a daily basis. The agribusiness people rejected the bishop's invitation to collaborate "in a spirit of confidence, reconciliation and mutual respect."

What accounts for this intransigence? In part it is due to the fact that under the military dictatorship the agribusiness can count on Pinochet's army, judges and police to back their arbitrary behavior. Another important factor is greed: corporate profits run in the millions, and successful entrepreneurs make several hundred times what a farm worker earns in a season.

Yes, the poisoning of the Chilean grapes was a reprehensible act, endangering innocent consumers. But unless action is taken to rectify the 18th-century conditions of farmworkers, to allow them to join in the benefits of the export boom, it will be hardly surprising if other incidents emerge. Desperate, hungry people need recourse to legal channels to adjudicate their rights and wrongs. American consumers should not suffer the consequences of absolute power and unmitigated greed.

James Petras teaches sociology at the State University of New York, Binghamton.

D.C.: death and cocaine

By Mike Tidwell

I WORK IN WASHINGTON, D.C., IN THE 1300 block of Park Road N.W., two miles from the White House. From street corner to street corner, this block is a 24-hour, open-air drug market. People kill each other with guns on Park Road. Three weeks ago a woman was murdered here, shot in the head during a drug dispute. She was the 101st victim of a district homicide explosion that, as of April 4, stood at 129, compared with 83 a year earlier.

As a counselor for the D.C. Coalition for the Homeless, I help manage a transitional house on Park Road for some of the city's 10,000 homeless people. Most of the residents at our facility are black men in their 20s and 30s. Half have been made homeless by a life-wasting addiction to crack cocaine, which is almost as abundant as air in the district.

The transitional house is surrounded by crack houses, boarded-up apartment buildings and the ramshackle tenement houses of the few fearful residents who haven't left yet. At night we lock the front door of our facility and listen to the police sirens outside, the angry drug disputes, the macabre screams, the crackle of gunfire. We listen to the sound of a city that has lost control of many of its neighborhoods.

"D.C." might as well stand for Dodge City. There is a siege mentality here. The mayor has declared a "crime emergency" and the city council has passed legislation that denies bail to drug dealers and puts a curfew on youths under 18. The police department has deployed a force of 400 new officers, made up of desk-job administrators and recruits with less than half their required training. The next step, some civic leaders say, is to call out the National Guard.

Meanwhile, William Bennett, the new federal drug czar, has said he will declare the district the nation's first "high-intensity drug trafficking area" as part of yet another high-sounding program to clean up the streets.

Since the crime emergency began in Washington we haven't noticed increased police presence on Park Road. The cops were already coming by every hour, and they still do. They question people outside the crack houses. They make searches and frisk bodies and arrest suspects. With their bullhorns they order people off the street. Ten minutes later the market is bustling again.

I work the four-to-midnight shift at the Park Road house. I take the bus to work and walk the final three blocks. Along the way I pass lawns strewn with debris, walls defaced with graffiti, trash whirling and looping in the wind. Twelve-year-old boys stand on corners, paid to spot cops. Men in army coats, collars up, approach me selling crack. I shake my head and keep walking.

When I reach the house at 4 p.m., I find the residents coming home from new jobs or from sessions with their social workers. Among my responsibilities is to counsel the men on the hazards of drugs, to tell them that drugs are bad and that they should avoid them. But when the men leave the house—to go to work, to buy eggs at the store, to attend a Narcotics Anonymous meeting—they're asked to buy crack five times before they reach the bus stop.

Don't look: When I first started working on Park Road, I would occasionally stand at the front-door window and just watch the open drug traffic, disbelieving. Several of the residents quickly admonished me, however: "Don't look too interested, man.

They'll shoot you, too." I've taken their advice. Now, when the noise grows loud outside and shooting erupts, I steal quick glances and retreat.

In the house hallway, leaning against the wall, are weapons. There's an ax handle, a couple of baseball bats and a four-iron golf club. Although it's not much, the residents keep these to defend themselves, and with good reason.

In January, on a night I wasn't working, there was a shootout outside the house. Two groups of dealers across the street got into an argument. One group fled toward our house, drawing handguns. From the yard next door they began exchanging gunfire with the men on the other side. Bullets flew across Park Road.

One of our residents, Charles, was standing outside our house, caught in the cross fire, screaming for someone to unlock the front door. He finally hit the ground and covered his head with his arms. By the time the police arrived the shooting had ended. Miraculously, no one was killed.

At midnight my shift ends, and I walk out onto Park Road, which is now bursting with business. I walk to the bus stop, scarf across my face, averting my eyes and shaking my head when I'm asked to buy drugs. The next morning I'll rise with the rest of Washington and read the continuing body count in the *Post*: "Night of Violence Leaves Four Dead."

The message from the nation's capital is unambiguous: this is the future. This is where the country's rising drug use and attendant law enforcement reaction are heading—more and more of both, with drugs winning handily. What's happening in Washington will soon happen in most big U.S. cities. There's no reason to think otherwise. Drug-related violence is up everywhere. Washington is just setting a new grisly pace.

And there's no reason to think other city officials will react differently. They'll declare crime emergencies and put desk offi-

cers on the street and toy with the idea of curfews and deploying the National Guard. Perhaps William Bennett will declare their cities "high-intensity drug trafficking areas," too, and they'll get part of the \$5.9-billion federal drug pie.

But a \$100-billion law-enforcement program won't stop what's happening on Park Road and streets like it. There have been so many murders in Washington this year because there is an enormous appetite for drugs in the city. Eight years of a law-and-order president, with George Bush as drug czar and the first lady telling everyone to say "no" didn't help. Cocaine consumption rose fourfold under Reagan. Short of assigning a cop to every dealer and user, the "get tough" route will never work.

Now, in an important test case, Bennett and the Washington police will work together to try to end the drug trade in the capital. After they fail (does anyone believe they'll succeed?) we will be left with three choices: accept the drug situation as it is, declare martial law in our inner cities or legalize drugs. The first two options are unacceptable.

Worst comes to worst: As for the third, the thought of marijuana and cocaine for sale at corner drugstores horrifies me. But the worst streets of Washington, D.C., horrify me, too, and they're getting worse. At least legalization would shut down the insidious crack houses and end the murder and anarchy on streets like Park Road. Money saved on law enforcement, moreover, could be channeled to drug education and treatment.

People who want to take drugs will take drugs, whether legally or not. But if they take them legally, we can catch them on their way out of the drugstores. We can counsel them and try to help them without constantly looking over our shoulders and dodging bullets on streets lifted from the frontier West.

Mike Tidwell lives in Washington, D.C.

The Vote and the Accord: Old Piss in New Bottles

I left on a trip to Brazil on the verge of the elections in El Salvador. Newspaper stories stressed the embarrassment that a victory by the "rightist"—that is, neofascist—Arena Party would cause the Bush administration. I returned to find a pile of stories and transcripts hailing the "newly moderate" Arena, now led by "Georgetown-educated" Fredy Cristiani, plus bleats by House Democratic leaders such as Tom Foley (D-WA) that Arena should be given a chance and that in the meantime the aid should continue to flow.

Next to this pile was another box of stories about the "bipartisan" agreement between the Bush administration and Congress on Nicaragua. These solemnly hailed the bold strides toward peace now jointly embarked upon, and quoted hopeful liberals describing a "new realism" on the part of Bush and his men, very different from the bad old days of the late lamented Ron.

Moral: you can get anyone to believe anything. Second moral: if you want to predict what "liberal Democrats" will do, figure out the worst, most feeble-minded strategy they might adopt and then act upon the assumption that they have done it. You'll be right 99 percent of the time.

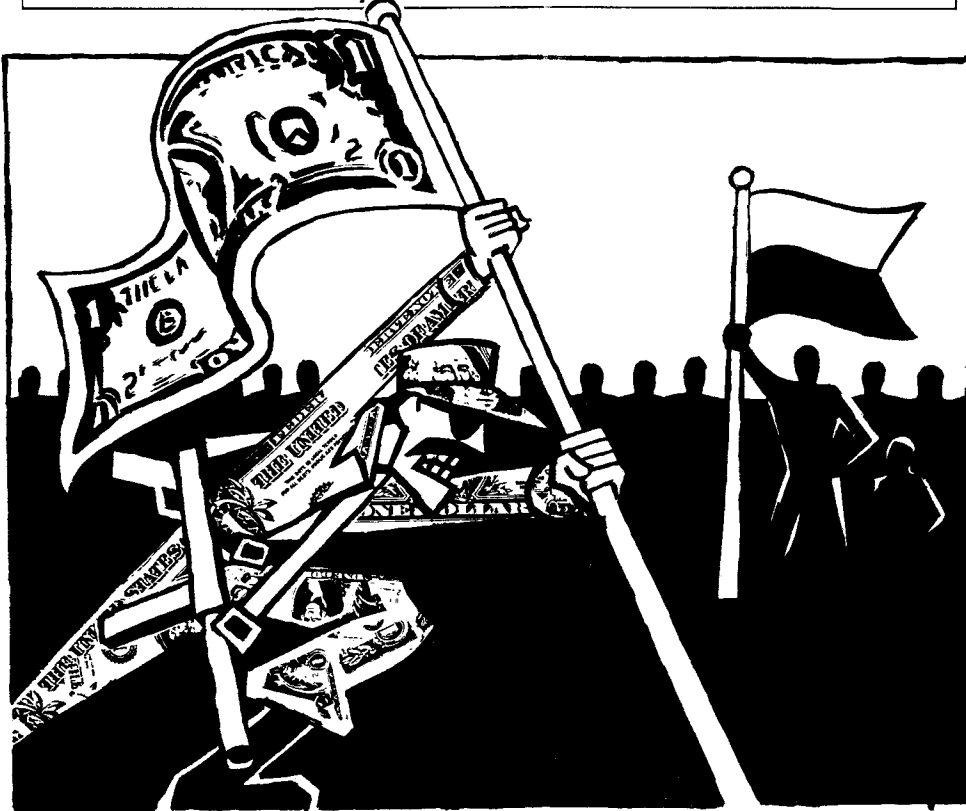
The "new" Arena: It was always a sure bet that the U.S. journalists assembled in San Salvador for the March 19 elections would do their duty—which was to stress the victory for "fragile democracy" achieved by Salvadoran voters, and to exult in the failure of the FMLN to "disrupt" the vote. The task of refashioning Cristiani and Arena into a body of pacifist economic technocrats adhering to the principles of the Ripon Society began well before the election and has continued ever since, with the most assiduous effort so far probably being that of Lindsey Gruson in the March 21 *New York Times*, "The new face of the right," concluding with the extended sports metaphor traditionally reserved for such uses: "A former national squash champion, the president-elect is said by opponents to have an innate feel for the right position and a soft touch. One competitor gave this assessment of the Cristiani style: 'He has a dancing, effortless wrist flick that allows him to win while looking like he's barely trying. He knows where the ball is going to go before I hit it, and he always seems to be there.'"

In fact, Arena got more or less exactly the support it won in 1984. It did not do better; the Christian Democrats simply did worse. Out of a population of about 5 million, 2.3 million or 2.4 million are eligible to vote. About 1.9 million registered and received voting cards. About 900,000 actually participated. So less than 50 percent of registered voters went to the polls. Arena got 508,845 votes, about 54 percent of those who did vote, which comes to 10 percent of the population and about 20 percent of the eligible voters.

How long will the U.S. press' honeymoon with Cristiani last? As long as it has to. The Duarte honeymoon—which lasted clean through the bloodlettings of the early '80s—is there to teach us the lesson. It would take an assiduous newspaper reader here to know that Arena members of the National Assembly blocked, in January, the trial of the Romero case; that Roberto D'Aubuis-

ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn



son, not Cristiani, dominated Arena's campaign; or, indeed, that the FMLN and the popular movements are stronger than ever. Such strength is certainly a political and military reality within El Salvador, but though it doubtless preoccupies the Bush administration, this strength is not reflected in any change in the terms of discussion of El Salvador in Congress, as witness Foley's pledge to keep—at least for now—the aid flowing.

The bipartisan accord: Being unable to believe the evidence of my own eyes, I kept slapping myself with a rolled-up copy of *The Nation* to make sure I was awake. Here was the *Boston Globe* editorializing that "President Bush's agreement with congressional leaders to limit aid to the contras means that the Nicaraguan war is over." Then I opened the copy of *The Nation* I was hitting myself with and read an editorial headed "All together now." What is it about the word "bipartisan" that causes people to return to intellectual infancy? "The accord," wrote *The Nation's* editorialist, "is probably the best that we can hope for from a Bush administration. For the contras, it looks less like a kiss of life than a shot of embalming fluid.... The bipartisan agreement over Nicaragua is probably better understood as a laborious rite of passage, a way station in the larger foreign policy transition that is so urgently needed."

With friends like these... What does the famous "bipartisan agreement" actually do? It proposes to give the contras \$4.5 million a month until the end of next February, the date of the next Nicaraguan elections. In other words, it keeps the contras alive in explicit rejection of the accord the five Central American presidents signed on February 14 in El Salvador.

Liberal defenders of the accord claim that the administration gave ground. How? The contras are still being funded, and the contras are still murdering people inside Nicaragua. What is the Bush administration's strategy? Clearly it is to shovel millions to its political creatures inside Nicaragua, demanding the right to fund new TV stations, newspapers, etc., etc. If the Nicaraguan government objects to outside interference, it will be denounced for under-

mining "democratic renewal." Meanwhile, the active presence of the contras will force Nicaragua to tie up miserably scarce funds in military security. If the Sandinistas prevail at the polls, the State Department will simply denounce the election as having been fixed, as per operating procedures established in November 1984, and request continued aid for the contras.

By all accounts Secretary of State James Baker first established a beachhead for the agreement with the Senate Democratic

Bush intends either to topple the Sandinista regime or to ensure that Nicaragua be kept as a living basket case to show what happens when small nations defy the U.S.

leadership, then used that as a cudgel over House Speaker Jim Wright, who is in a somewhat weakened personal political position. The deal was fixed just as Congress went into recess, and many members have not yet made their positions clear.

It should be remembered that the legislation to ratify the agreement has yet to be written, let alone voted upon. Though it is scarcely likely, the deal could go down, just as a previous compact on "humanitarian aid" was torpedoed by a mixture of Republicans and House liberals unalterably opposed to any renewal of contra aid.

The anti-interventionist network seems at first to have been taken off balance but are now rallying opposition. One Democratic staffer on the Hill said he didn't see this as a repeat of the bitter schisms when anti-interventionist organizations split down the middle on humanitarian aid. He imagined they would all be opposed.

For example, Bill Callaghan at Quest for Peace is urging strong opposition to the aid agreement. He regards it as a violation of the peace accord and destructive to the

region. Both the administration and the Democratic leadership are asking to be trusted, but as Callaghan points out, "We have no grounds whatsoever to trust either of them. Jim Baker was chief of staff for Reagan's first term and helped build the contras. The administration is still determined to overthrow the Sandinistas, via economic means rather than military." Bush's supposedly "smooth" approach is harder to organize against. Either way, Bush intends either to topple the Sandinistas or ensure that "Nicaragua...be kept as a living basket case to show what happens when small nations defy the U.S." Callaghan states there is no reason to trust the Democratic leadership. They also have ignored the progress Nicaragua has made and Nicaragua's compliance with the peace accord. On Friday, March 17, the Nicaraguan government released 1,894 members of Somoza's national guard. No Democratic leader commented on this, and this momentous gesture was ignored. Instead, they pointed to the 39 prisoners who weren't released, one the assassin of Carlos Fonseca. Callaghan reminds people that the agreement still has to be written into law and the deal is not finished, so people should not be hoodwinked.

Marilyn Felian of the Omaha Central America Response Team in Nebraska is a returned long-term volunteer from Nicaragua for Witness for Peace. She has initiated a creative grass-roots lobbying effort. People are being encouraged to send letters to Democrats urging them to vote against the accord, enclosing calcium tablets to help strengthen their spines. "We are sending these calcium tablets to you to strengthen your backbone in time to vote no in the upcoming contra aid vote. We are sending them because political analysts are saying that the recent fray over the John Tower nomination did considerable damage to the Democratic backbones, thus explaining the astoundingly quick and easy capitulation to this administration's call for more contra aid. What a shame."

From Witness for Peace, its director of the Washington office, Dennis Marker, called the agreement "horrendous." Among his points: the secret process whereby the deal was struck was in itself odious. Marker called it the "secret Senate sellout." Another \$40 million to the contras "simply means more dead children. Congress has appropriated no military aid to the contras since August 1986 [at that time, scheduled to run to July 1987]. Yet between January 1988 and February 1989 there have been 98 separate contra attacks against civilians; 147 civilians have been killed, with many of these children and infants; 150 wounded and 281 kidnapped." The notion that the agreement fitted with the Central American presidents' accord was absurd, since that had called for "demobilization," "repatriation" and "relocation," and not for another year for the contras in Honduras. What Witness for Peace has done is draft its own legislation calling for dismantling the contras in a manner consistent with the February peace accord, submitting this draft to about 200 members of Congress.

It's all enough to make one yearn for the bumbling crudities of George Shultz, rather than the smooth Baker, who gripped these congressional leaders and led them along firmly by the nose in a direction they have always found pretty congenial. Back to the trenches, fellows.

Distributed by the L.A. Weekly.

The Politics of Surrealism

By Helena Lewis
Paragon House
229 pp., \$12.95

By Claire Sprague

WE ARE SPECIALISTS IN REVOLT," the surrealists announced in 1925. They were. They turned painting, poetry, drama, sculpture and film upside down with their delighted destruction of artistic verities. They were also highly political. That side of their revolt, too often ignored, is fully and successfully addressed in Helena Lewis' engrossing analytic history of surrealism's radical politics.

André Breton, the movement's charismatic leader and major theoretician, steered his followers through a long, turbulent relationship with the Communist Party. Surrealism enlarged and focused the anti-bourgeois politics of Dada (it even absorbed one of Dada's founders, Tristan Tzara). Although Tzara and others ultimately left the surrealist group, surrealism had a longer life than is commonly thought; it was alive and well at least up to the beginning of World War II.

Others push the death of surrealism forward to 1966 when Breton died. Yet surrealism continues to affect the arts. Dates of inauguration and closure are, of course, more fictive than real. Like other movements, this one had antecedents that preceded its birth and effects far beyond whatever date one chooses for its death.

Schisms and isms: How could a group so fervently anti-formal, one so dedicated to the many forms of "unmaking" that critics today identify with a new *ism*, postmodernism—openness, heterodoxy, randomness, deformity, discontinuity—be attracted to the rationalist and teleological emphasis of Marxism? For one thing, the Russian Revolution had created enormous excitement and hope about the possibilities of social change. For another, the Soviet Union was open to artistic experiment in the '20s; its own artists, poets and musicians were members of the international avant-garde, a fact too little known here. (The Russian constructivists, for example, have only recently had major U.S. shows.)

If there is a paradox in the surrealists' embrace of communism, perhaps it is a paradox that hindsight has created. For the surrealists, or for Breton and those whose allegiance he kept, regained or attracted, revolutionary art without a social and political component was inconceivable.

The surrealists' first cohesive political action occurred in 1925 when they supported the Moroccan rebels in the Riff War. Breton's leadership in the decision to attack the French government during the



Dali by Dali

Arguments with history: the sharp political line of the surrealists

war threw the movement, according to Lewis, into "a new, overtly political phase" that transformed the surrealists "from a small group of anarchistic artists into an organized movement with revolutionary political as well as aesthetic goals." Bre-

ART

ton remained on the left even after his expulsion from the Party in 1935 (he had officially joined in 1927) for his attack on the new Franco-Soviet Pact.

The doctrine of socialist realism, adopted at the first meeting of the Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934, was another cause of disaffection for surrealists, as were the Moscow trials. But the Great Depression, the rise of fascism and the Spanish Civil War helped keep these artists on the left. Not all members approved of Breton's politics. Antonin Artaud, one of those who disapproved, was attacked and expelled for the sin of being a closet Christian.

Collectivist unconscious: Surrealist theories about creativity suggest another connection between surrealist politics and surrealist art. Breton seized upon Freud's theory of the unconscious, one of the first Frenchmen to do so, recognizing it as a crucial ally for acts of unmaking.

He had come upon the theories of Freud in 1916, while he was a medical student, and quickly saw the re-

lation between the existence of an unconscious and the undermining of representational art. How could, or why should, the invisible unconscious be represented by conventional iconography, by what Breton called "the provoking insanities of 'realism'?" Furthermore, since everyone has an unconscious, everyone is a potential poet. This insistence—some have called it naive—on the democracy of artistic potential has a long 19th-century pedigree in the theories of Wordsworth, Shelley and Whitman.

Releasing the potentially creative unconscious was the point of the surrealists' techniques. The art of free association was cultivated, word games were invented, trance was induced, dreams were recited, spontaneity and chance were idealized.



Salvador Dali's work represents surrealism's commercial flank.

Breton was never an obedient Communist Party supporter. He could attack *L'Humanité*, the official Communist paper in Paris, as "childish, declamatory, unnecessarily cretinizing" and "utterly unreadable." He slapped the Soviet journalist Ilya Ehrenburg publicly in anger over the machinations used to win writer support for the Franco-Soviet pact.

The anarchistic element in surrealism never entirely disappeared. When he was rebuked by the left for his provocative statement that "the simplest surrealist act consists of going into the street, revolver in hand, and firing into the crowd," Breton tried to explain that he was not to be taken literally, that he meant to inspire spontaneity, not violence.

While on a French government-sponsored visit to Mexico in 1938, Breton met Trotsky through Mexican painter Diego Rivera. Breton had long admired Trotsky, whose denunciation of socialist realism as an imitation of "provincial daguerreotypes of the previous century" coincided with his own view. Their ideas and their personalities meshed better than Breton's and Freud's. Breton, who had sought out Freud in Vienna in 1921, wanted to use the unconscious imaginatively, not therapeutically.

Casting a wide net: The roster of artists who at one time or another considered themselves surrealists remains impressive. It includes Breton, Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, Georges Bataille, Tzara, Philippe Soupault, Man Ray, Max Ernst, Francis Picabia, Salvador Dali, Jean Arp, Yves Tanguy, René Magritte, André Masson, Giorgio de Chirico, Artaud, Luis Buñuel, Joan Miró, Alberto Giacometti and Henry Moore. Perhaps the examples of Aragon and Dali will show how wide a net the movement could cast and how far apart its members could grow.

Aragon became the committed communist, Dali, the complete commercial exhibitionist. One became devoted to social causes, the other became so devoted to making money that Breton nicknamed him Avida Dollars, an anagram of his name. Soon after his public embrace of communism, Aragon described himself as "no longer the

author of *Payan de Paris* but of *Front rouge*," a poem that contained lines like "Gloire à dialectique matérialisme." By the time Dali joined the surrealists in 1930, Aragon had left them. Inevitably, given his embrace of Franco and his attraction to Hitler, Dali was expelled before the decade was over, although he was the movement's most celebrated painter. Dali's flair for publicity was unerring. What reporter could ignore remarks like the one Dali made about living in New York, "There I am in the middle of a cascade of checks which arrive like the diarrhea?"

In one area the surrealists were remarkably conventional. These anti-bourgeois males were wholly bourgeois in their attitudes toward women and homosexuals. They were sexist and homophobic. For instance, Breton asserted, without apparent irony, that a woman's preferences had nothing to do with the male's pleasure in sexual intercourse. Women were expected to serve men as wives, mistresses and muses—as objects only.

Breton even claimed to have divorced his second wife because she wanted to become a painter. There were women surrealist artists, like Meret Oppenheim, but they felt they needed to leave Paris before they could become productive. The surrealist celebration of physical love had a dark underside in brutal depictions of dismembered and distorted female nudes.

Many descendants of surrealism have safe and salable styles. Collage techniques have invaded the most commercial styles—TV and billboard advertising and music videos. These politically denuded styles were not what the student uprisings of the late '60s saw in surrealism. In 1968, Sorbonne students chanted: "Vive la révolution surréaliste!" and "All power to the imagination." A special issue of the Students for a Democratic Society-sponsored *Radical America* was devoted to "Surrealism in the service of the revolution," the title of an earlier surrealist review.

Other deconstructions of bourgeois aesthetics—"happenings," Living Theater productions, action painting, Beat poetry, pop art—also testify to the continuing viability of the surrealist legacy. That legacy has at least a double potential, one commercial and one politically and artistically radical. For an understanding of how and why politics and art collaborated and battled in and out of the remarkably protean surrealist movement, Helena Lewis' study is indispensable. Her work suggests that the surrealist influence is still at work among those who wish to unite radical politics and radical art in new ways.

■
Claire Sprague is a visiting professor at New York University. Her most recent book is *Rereading Doris Lessing*.

**Prepared for the Worst:
Selected Essays & Minority
Reports**

By Christopher Hitchens
Hill & Wang
357 pp., \$19.95

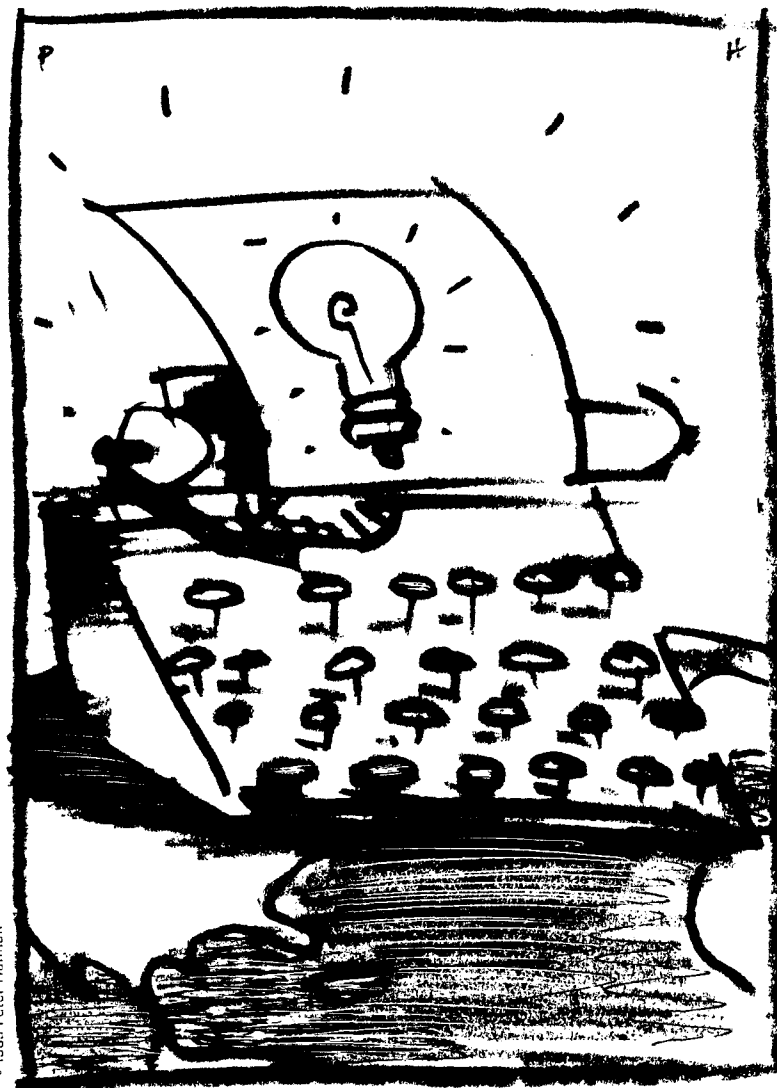
By James North

I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO ENCOUNTER Christopher Hitchens' work 10 years ago, before he left Britain for Reaganite America. He did a superb piece of reporting on Rhodesia in *The New Statesman* in which he demolished the line, almost unanimously hewed to back then, that the guerrillas who continued to fight the white supremacist regime even after it had installed a black figurehead were a minority of "terrorists." When I arrived in Africa shortly thereafter, I made a beeline for Hitchens' sources. In the end his leads made me one of the few outside journalists who predicted the crashing guerrilla victory in the February 1980 elections. If I ever meet him, I owe him more than a few of the countless pints my perspicacity won from the rest of the press corps.

That piece is unfortunately not in this collection, but another 70 or so are, a full sampling of his essays and reviews over the past decade. Hitchens is almost maddeningly well-read and versatile. Those who are most familiar with his column in *The Nation* will be pleased to see much longer essays from *Grand Street* and *Granta* in which he has more room to stretch. Also, his shorter work may give the somewhat misleading impression that he is merely a counter-puncher, a more polite version of Alexander Cockburn. But there is more to him than that.

Counterpunchers we do need, and

Minority retorts and other stories



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he has spent more than his share of time in the ring. Consider this: he has read and reviewed the work of Charles Krauthammer. He has read and reviewed several books by Henry Kissinger. Most horrifying of

all, he seems to have read the entire collected works of *Commentary's* editor, Norman Podhoretz, a man whose immediate family would fail a lie detector test if they swore to the same feat. Hitchens frequently

uses the word "rebarbative" to describe these worthies. After I looked it up, I mentally excused him for what at first sounded a little pretentiously sesquipedalian.

Quirky and effective: Hitchens, for instance, reminds us that Kissinger was the man who first used the ugly term "basket case" to describe a country, Bangladesh, in which 100 million fellow human beings live. Part of Bangladesh's agony was due to Kissinger's efforts to prevent it from winning independence from

POLITICS

Pakistan, which had been carrying out a campaign of genocide against its people.

For me, though, the best section is "Datelines," where he reports from all over the world, especially Central America and the Middle East. His modus operandi is unusual and highly effective, somewhat reminiscent of the quirky approach of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who is a terrific reporter quite aside from penning masterpieces like *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. (Garcia Marquez, for example, portrayed the heady days of freedom after the Portuguese dictatorship was toppled in 1974 by dwelling at some length on Lisbon's new wave of "spectacular auto accidents.")

Hitchens' essays on Nicaragua and El Salvador are the best I've ever read on either subject. In Nicaragua, he bases his account around two writers—Sergio Ramirez, the novelist and Sandinista vice president, and Pablo Antonio Cuadra, the poet who also edited the opposition *La Prensa's* literary section. Hitchens skillfully uses the disagreements between these two to describe the

country with insight and nuance.

His piece on El Salvador—"The Cathouse and the Cross"—is even better. He notes the mood of "simultaneous servility and resentment" with which the prostitutes at Gloria Cesar's establishment regard their American clients and uses it as a metaphor for the relations between the Salvadoran elite and the U.S. government that continues to keep them in power. By 1987 the country recorded a historic first: American aid exceeded the contribution of Salvadorans themselves to the national budget. In return, the oligarchs continue the war against the guerrillas while, at least temporarily, reining in their death squads. (Since Hitchens' report, the squads are increasing their nightriding again.) "As at Gloria Cesar's," Hitchens explains, "this transaction is one that degrades both parties while leaving them both, in contrasting ways, temporarily better off."

In another offering, Hitchens pungently summarizes his own values as he rips apart one of the more immoral ideas of this low, dishonest decade. He says: "In the charmed circle of neoliberal and neoconservative journalism, however, 'unpredictability' is the special emblem and certificate of self-congratulation. To be able to bray that 'as a liberal, I say bomb the shit out of them' is to have achieved that eye-catching versatile marketability that is so beloved of editors and talk-show hosts. As a lifelong socialist, I say don't bomb the shit out of them. See what I mean? It lacks the sex appeal, somehow. Predictable as hell."

James North, former *In These Times* South Africa correspondent, is working on a book about the world debt crisis.

**Wilderness: The Lost
Writings of Jim Morrison,
Volume I**

Villard Books
214 pp., \$12.95

By Richard Ryan

JIM MORRISON, YOU'RE NO WALT Whitman. But then, in fairness, neither are any of your colleagues.

What makes for great poetry—Wordsworth called it strong emotion recalled in tranquillity—does not make for great rock'n'roll, which is never recalled in tranquillity. And vice versa. Dylan's best lyrics—so wondrous when they are sung—look silly and aimless in print. Not even Beat, which tried to move poetry closer to the spontaneous rhythms of American English (and which influenced many of the '60s art rockers), could bridge the gap between poetry and rock. Can you imagine trying to dance to "Howl"?

Before he died in 1971, Jim Morrison produced six albums with the Doors and three books of poetry on his own. The albums are rock classics and the books are out of print, which gives a fair idea of where Morrison's talents lay. Now, however,

Morrison's poetic license revoked

four of Morrison's surviving coterie have plowed through 1,600 pages of notes, journals and diaries the legend left his heirs, and have sewn together a ragged, rather dated garment: *Wilderness*.

The book is interesting chiefly as a document that captures a genius in a popular medium trying to make the transition to the realm of high

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culture. Trained by spontaneous rock performances to let his feelings run wild, in these writings Morrison was groping for a less indulgent way to convey the same electrified emotions. He seems to have understood that the rules were different, that he'd have to get over his frenzied verbal riffings. In a brief "self-interview" at the beginning of this volume, this most serious of teen idols explains that he wanted his poetry to be "like automatic writing. But it just never happened."

On the contrary, it happened too much. Pages are filled with hasty imagery and tired theatrics. There is

the expected hallucinatory chanting, the highways and angels and tears straight from the pop warehouse. And, as you might expect of a sex symbol, there's an awful lot of fear of sex at work here. Did he really want to go "into the brothel, into the bloodbath"?

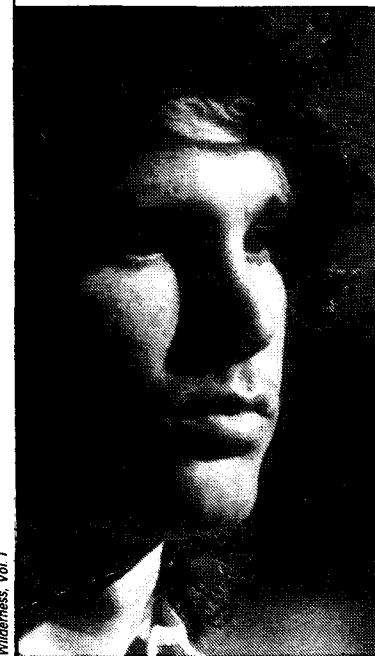
Morrison is more than just an overreaching pop star, however. He has, in bursts, a sense of lyrical subtlety, as well as a sense of the tradition of American verse. He can write with Dickinson's ethereal domesticity ("Starling invaders/ vast promissory notes of joy") and Ezra Pound's courtly hauteur ("My friends and I come from/ Far Arden w/dances, & new music"). Unfortunately, he can also sound like one of those pimply metal freaks that keep Tipper Gore up at night ("Can you dig it? My meat is real").

I am sorry to say the best moments are infrequent. If he had to be a visionary, I would have preferred more of the refined utopian who imagined himself "the monarch of the protean towers/ on the cool stone patio/ above the iron mists." Or more

of the earnest young man who could state simply "the politics of ecstasy is real."

If nothing else, *Wilderness* convinces me that artists will always have to choose between the urgent, preintellectual experience of rock and the focused verbal tensions of

Jim "Lizard King" Morrison



Wilderness, Vol. I

poetry. Morrison clearly had made his choice, even if he wasn't entirely satisfied with it. On *Morrison Hotel*, maybe the best Doors album, the singer claimed, "I'm an old blues man/ I've been singing the blues since the world began."

I'll buy that: it's still a pose, but a better one than the Lizard King. And it meshes with the burned-out honesty in the final (also the best and most compelling) section of *Wilderness*, "As I Look Back." Morrison saw the "History of Rock coinciding w/my adolescence," remembered that "Elvis had sex-wise mature voice at 19," and called himself "an interesting singer at best—a scream or a sick croon. Nothing in between." Explaining at least one of his excesses, Morrison wrote: "I drink so I can talk to assholes. This includes me." And in a casual stanza he elegized whole busloads of dead rockers: "Regret for the wasted nights/ and wasted years/ I pissed it all away/ American music." In those words I sense the resignation of a man who has discovered his limits, who then knows that for all his romantic brilliance he will never "hear the last Poem of the last Poet."

Richard Ryan is a writer living in Washington, D.C.

The Adventures of Baron Munchausen
Directed by Terry Gilliam
Paperhouse
Directed by Bernard Rose

By Pat Aufderheide

Fantasy beyond the baron wasteland

THE TENSION BETWEEN FANTASY and reality is built into film from its origins, with the documentary work of Louis Lumière contrasting with that of the magician-turned-filmmaker Georges Méliès. Film history is shot through with the contradictions of the imaginary in the real and the real in the imaginary. Committed fantasists, ever since Méliès, want to draw the viewer into a suspension of belief in the mundane. Two recent fantasy films test, in dramatically different ways, the capacities of jaded audiences to suspend belief.

The Adventures of Baron Munchausen, ex-Monty Python member Terry Gilliam's long-awaited \$40-million-plus spectacle, wages war on rationalism with state-of-the-art film engineering. Gilliam (director of, among others, *Time Bandits* and *Brazil*) translates the tall tales of 18th-century Baron Munchausen into a non-stop and ultimately exhausting series of special effects extravaganzas. *Baron Munchausen* is crammed with film gags and sly practical jokes on perceptions, but the parts add up to less than a whole.

Gilliam doesn't take flights of fancy—they're more like long marches.

From the start of *Baron Munchausen*, as the Turks are waging war on a European town that is a crazed urban amalgam of Vienna, London and Paris, Gilliam picks sides and targets his enemy. Titles read: "The Age of Reason: Wednesday." The archenemy of the piece is the town official Jackson (Jonathan Pryce), who licenses theaters and executes war heroes—he conducts the town's defense with a cracked and cruel logic.

Reality bandits: The film opens on a Méliès-like set of a stage production of the adventures of the baron, swiftly interrupted by the baron himself (John Neville). Flashbacks take us to the origins of the war, in Munchausen's challenge to a Turkish pasha in his harem. Soon the baron takes off for adventures in the company of Sally, a little girl from the theater company (Sarah Polley).

Sally and the baron go to the moon, plummet into the maw of a giant sea monster and return with Munchausen's gang of magic-workers to rescue the town. But in all these high jinks, what's always front and center is Gilliam's manipulation of technology to execute an idiosyncratically personal vision.

Gilliam (who co-wrote the script

with Charles McKeown) has the baron say, "Reality, sir, is lies and balderdash, and I'm delighted that I have no grasp of it whatsoever." You know it's really Gilliam talking there, and you know something rings false in that emphatic rejection of reality. What's wrong is that fantasy lives not in its own complete world but

FILM

in its relation to reality. And rather than exploring that relationship, Gilliam seems to want to blow it up and become a tinpot deity of filmic fantasy that's aggressively his, not his and ours.

Fancy free-for-all: It's even unclear what the liberating capacity of imagination is in this overdeveloped private world. When the baron finds out the gods are planning a nuclear warhead, for instance, he asks, "What's the fun in that?" His idea of fun—and what an Enlightenment-era boy's fantasy it is—is large-as-life mayhem with life-size soldiers and plenty of explosions, not just one big one.

The real heroes here are the set design and special effects. As in *Brazil*, machinery is on display that is gargantuan, complex and exposed; gears and cranks and belts and teeth become monsters of their own. The Turkish pasha has an elaborate caliope on which he plays Gilbert-and-Sullivan-style ditties that activate an automatic torture device, and thus create contrapuntal sound effects in the screams of the tortured. Set design offers eye deceptions that, like an Escher drawing, confound our complacency. *Alice in Wonderland*-like games are played with the relative size of different characters and their contexts. Sequences like the trip to the moon, where a voyage by air becomes one by water and then one on sand, hypnotize with their play on expectation and film's ability to make the impossible undeniable.

The banana-peel effect of shifting expectations, the awesome technical wonders and indulgent appreciation of Gilliam's adolescent impudence carry a viewer a far way. But the film founders, partly on its own constantly shifting rules of the game. It's difficult to get emotionally invested in the plight of characters who always have a bottomless bag of tricks (or whose context shifts so rapidly that all the rules will change anyway). And partly it founders because Gilliam's retreat from Enlightenment rationalism is conducted with the tools of Enlightenment progress in science and engineering.

There may never have been a bet-



Charlotte Burke teeters on a dream in *Paperhouse*.

ter time to flee reality, but *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* never lets the viewer flee along with Sally and the baron. We're always too busy being impressed by Gilliam flaunting his fantasy. By the time you're out of the theater, you can't remember your favorite parts.

Dream girl: *Paperhouse* is a fantasy that intertwines disturbingly with reality, and the film haunts the memory like a bad dream. In this film—directed by Bernard Rose and produced by Tim Bevan and Sarah Radclyffe (*My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, *A World Apart*)—the worst happens. A dream comes true.

Anna, a preadolescent English girl (Charlotte Burke), falls ill, and must spend time in bed. Young enough to be treated like a child, she is old enough to chafe at such treatment. She talks back to her mom and feels bad about it; she misses her dad (who's traveling for work) and feels bad about that.

In bed, Anna begins drawing a picture of a house, and then dreams about it. Waking, she draws a figure in the window, who turns out, in her dreams, to be a sick little boy her doctor has told her about. In her waking life, she tries to draw the boy child into health, but this only—in her dreams—sets in motion a terrifying conflict involving her father.

The film uses about a dime's worth of special effects—tracking shots and subjective cameras do a

lot of the spooky work. Set design (by Gemma Jackson) is exceptional, as much for its capturing of universal terrors as for its simplicity. The soundtrack also excels in its use of simple but effective gambits (including ostinato and the ordinary sounds of daily life—garbage collection, for example, and the radio—turned to terror). The film's most important technique is to mix the real and the fantastic, so that, for instance, in Anna's waking life she finds she cannot erase her pencil drawings. Her dream life is usually lit differently from her waking life, but most of the terms of reality apply to it.

Paperhouse doesn't need flashy special effects because it draws on viewers' preoccupations and fantasies. It's not surprising that Catherine Storr, the author of the book on which it was based, *Marianne Dreams*, is married to a child psychologist. And if some of the conflicts, especially those between father and daughter, seem a touch didactic in presentation, they also have an undeniable power. The film doesn't resolve neatly, which only enhances its disturbing effect.

Paperhouse makes rich use of the way that fantasy and reality interpenetrate. It calls forth in viewers their own desires and frustrations. *Munchausen* simply uses fantasy as a battering ram against rationalism, and by the end it's the audience that feels battered.

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JEAN-PAUL SARTRE TALKS ABOUT HIS COFFEE...

You know me, I used to suffer from grim foreboding, debilitating ennui, and existential angst. Then my doctor told me it was just caffeine that was bothering me. But with BEAN and NOTHINGNESS brand coffee, I get whole-bean flavor with no caffeine. Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got a lot of books to rewrite.



Rough CUTS BY JAREID

By Eric Lindbom

Hospital musical is more than the same old song and dance

THE HOSPITAL SYSTEM IN NEW York City is in crisis," laments Moe Foner, the retired executive secretary of Local 1199, a union representing more than 80,000 hospital workers in the Rotting Apple. "Hospitals are overcrowded. There are more poor people requiring care, in addition to the AIDS problem. There's a very acute shortage of nurses and technicians in hospitals, and the jobs don't pay well," he says.

This grim situation hardly seems the stuff of upbeat musical entertainment, but Foner is a producer as well as a realist. During the winter, Bread and Roses, a theater troupe he helped organize, toured *Take Care III* (an original musical revue Foner calls "the hospital workers' Chorus Line") to more than 25 city hospitals, as well as nursing homes and homeless shelters.

Take Care III, Bread and Roses' third touring musical revue, is propelled by an exuberant, multiracial cast of Equity actors (anchored by Ann Duquesnay, who played Billie Holiday in the off-Broadway *Lady Day* and sings a mean blues). Mixing spoken skits with rap, blues and calypso numbers, it serves as a cathartic pep test for hospital aides, X-ray technicians, dieticians, nurses, clerics and social workers—on their turf and on their lunch hours.

Judging from the raucous crowd reaction at a performance in a union hall, *Take Care III* provides a gospel-styled release. The audience of hospital workers and patients broke out in cheers of recognition at irreverent, unglamorous characters like an ambitious dishwasher and a sarcastic nurse's aide ("they used to call us maids but we got them to drop the 'm'").

"We look at this show as another way to unite our members; one of its values is to show that our members are working hard," says Foner. "What we wanted to say is: this is who we are—potwashers, dieticians and nurses, and our jobs are becoming increasingly difficult."

From pressure cooker to burnout: *Take Care III* manages to be optimistic but saccharine-free. The show grinds no political axes, and sloganeering is kept to a minimum. The characters, who merely want some respect, are buffeted by pressure, and the strain shows. A Spanish-speaking patient prompts a harried nurse to gripe, "Tell him to learn to speak English or get out and let somebody have his bed who does." In another scene, three nurses, hardly martyrs from the Mike Farrell era of *M*A*S*H*, bring up Florence Nightingale's name sarcastically.

One of the best sketches examines job burnout. To a dietician, burnout means doing his tedious job in a constant state of half-sleep, but to a stressed-out nurse it has a different definition.

"Burnout is when it's eight in the morning. You're working emergency. The shift's just started. A woman

comes in. Five kids. No husband. No money. She's 23 years old. No teeth. One kid's coughing. Another is cut. The woman's running a hundred and two. You take her blood pressure. You're the only one there. Her pressure is outrageous...and then the real emergencies start, and the patients keep coming, and the sickness is there, and you start to realize that it's never going to end."

For a specialized product, *Take III* boasts some heavy-duty writer credits, including Micki Grant (composer and author of the Broadway musical *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope*), actor/playwright Ossie Davis and Alan Menken (lyricist/composer for the stage and movie version of *Little Shop of Horrors*). In a sense, the show was co-written by the union membership. More than 50 hospital workers described their jobs and day-to-day concerns at workshop sessions that provided the raw material for each sketch.

Take Care III won rave reviews from feature writers for the *New York Times*, *Post* and *Daily News*, and from *Village Voice* theater critic Jan Hoffman. But the critics the Bread and Roses staffers watch just as

carefully are the audience members who fill out evaluation sheets after each performance.

Off-off-off-Broadway: Typically, the Bread and Roses troupe performed at two hospitals a day, ultimately reaching more than 10,000 hospital workers (a bigger crowd

LABOR

than many off-Broadway shows enjoy before they close). Since performance spaces were usually cramped meeting rooms, director Tony Gilote and musical arranger Howard Roberts created a street-theater-styled production with virtually no props and a three-piece band.

Though the play was partially supported by funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York State Council on the Arts and the Aaron Diamond Foundation, the union also had to become involved in fundraising, as well as hiring the talent and booking hospital space for all the performances.

One of the final performances was at the state capital in Albany before delegates of the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus. The pur-

pose was to bring the hospital crisis home—to the politicians who helped create it.

Gov. Mario Cuomo recently announced a plan to allocate hospitals and other health-care providers an additional \$193 million in state funds for increased salaries to help alleviate the widening nurses shortage. Even this outlay won't counteract state budget cuts that are toppling hospitals in the city's poorest sections.

"Whether or not you get adequate health care in New York is largely a function of your income and employment status," Bruce Vladeck, president of the United Hospital Fund recently told the *New York Times*. A recent Fund report, "Poverty and Health in New York City,"

In a sense, *Taking Care III* was co-written by the membership of Local 1199.

states that a "large and persistent health deficit" exists among "the poor, near-poor and minorities." Nearly one-fourth of the city's residents were living in poverty in 1985.

Local 1199 has participated in demonstrations and held meetings with editorial-page writers with the New York press to draw attention to these issues.

1199's radical past: Bread and Roses takes its name from the rallying cry of a 1912 strike at a textile mill in Lawrence, Mass. Forty-seven women and children protested a mid-winter pay cut by carrying signs reading "We Want Bread and Roses Too." (1199 eventually convinced Lawrence to hold a commemoration, which Foner claims is "the only time a town celebrated a day honoring its own radical past.")

Local 1199's past is equally radical. The union was born in 1959, when a group of pharmacists organized workers in voluntary hospitals. The workers, mostly black and Hispanic women, struck for 46 days for the right to organize. They were repudiated but didn't give up. When they struck again for 56 days in 1962, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller gave in.

Throughout the '60s the union earned a reputation as politically active. Martin Luther King called it "the conscience of the labor movement." But in 1984 the union fell into disarray. The next two years were characterized by power grabs and a disastrous strike. Lost in the political shuffle, Bread and Roses went into an extended hiatus.

New leadership in 1986 under President Dennis Rivera turned things around. Recently the union helped convince the management at Presbyterian Hospital not to fire 300 employees (150 of them union members). 1199 also won a major victory by unionizing home-care workers (a group that often earned what union employees made 30 years ago).

Yet, *Taking Care III* has been one of the union's best forms of publicity. For Foner, putting the musical revue to bed was difficult because of the emotional reactions from audiences. A mother of an AIDS patient told him, "This will be the last show my son will ever see." Even as the revue's run wound down, demand for performances continued.

To preserve the show for future use, the professional team that shot the "Sun City" rock video volunteered to tape the show. The taping session also featured interviews with hospital workers. It's presently being edited down to a 30-minute version that may emerge as a documentary. In some form, the tape will be made available to hospital workers so the play can keep hitting the road.

Taking Care III is hardly the tourniquet that will stop the New York health system from hemorrhaging. Instead, it's a psychological band-aid that shows the members of Local 1199 that somebody understands.

Eric Lindbom is a writer living in New York City.



Taking Care III takes its show on the road to New York City's Hospital for Joint Diseases.

© Donna Binder, Impact Visuals

Xenophobia

Continued from page 3

its PAC money against legislators in Florida and California who refused to repeal a special tax on the profits of foreign multinationals. Other foreign PACs tried to block the reauthorization of the Clean Water Act in 1984. Currently Sony is funding the Electronic Industries Association's campaign against government funding of an American-owned high-definition TV industry.

But few in Congress support screening foreign multinationals and limiting their political activity. When Rep. John Bryant (D-TX) and Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) sponsored an amendment to the 1987 omnibus trade bill that would have required large-scale foreign investors to file disclosure forms, the bill narrowly passed the House but was defeated 83-to-11 in the Senate.

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The amendment's defeat demonstrated the political strength of the foreign multinationals, represented in powerful lobbies by top American officials, like former cabinet official Elliot Richardson, the spokesman for the Association for Foreign Investment in America, and former ambassador and Republican fundraiser J. William Middendorf, the head of the Association of Foreign Investors in U.S. Real Estate. But foreign multinationals also enjoyed the support of American corporate lobbies like the Business Roundtable. In their book the Tolchins write, "The list of lobbyists in the coalition against the amendment read like a Who's Who of foreign and American multinationals, business trade associations and blue-chip Washington law firms."

Corporate lobbyists charged that the legislation was laden with anti-Japanese racism, but their real concern was that screening foreign multinationals could lead to government supervision of American multinationals. They don't want regulation of multinationals, foreign or American. Anthony Solomon, former president of the New York Federal Reserve, told *The New York Times*, "People who would have the government protect business against foreign investors would also have the government interfere in the global activities of American multinational corporations and controls on international trade."

But even with the defeat of the Bryant-Harkin amendment, the issue is unlikely to go away. There is considerable popular support for government regulation of both foreign- and American-based multinationals. In future elections Democrats running on a program of economic nationalism would be wise to avoid anti-Japanese xenophobia and also insist on regulation of all multinationals.

Daley

Continued from page 6

ing some lakefront precincts that voted for Jesse Jackson in the 1988 Democratic presidential primary. More than 70 percent of the Hispanic vote went to Daley. Black turnout increased from the primary, but remained below both the white turnout and black participation in 1983 and 1987.

Daley can now claim a coalition of white ethnics, lakefront whites and Hispanics—and with judicious distribution of some favors can probably boost his 5-7 percent share of black votes. The lakefront, white independent movement temporarily appears in shambles, raising the prospect of a city even more clearly divided by race in future elections.

Contradictions: Some observers think Daley could be like Mayor Ray Flynn of Boston, who defeated a black candidate but attempted in office to address black issues. But there has been no such populist streak in Daley's conservative past or in his sanitized mayoral campaign.

Daley's vague campaigning papered over potential contradictions among his supporters. Many neighborhood ethnics think downtown developers should pay linkage fees on new projects to develop neighborhoods, but Daley and his financial backers

are adamantly opposed. Daley promises better schools, but he has not supported higher state income taxes, which would be opposed by many of his white backers who are elderly or have children in parochial schools. Nevertheless, Rose feels that Daley's supporters are probably so content simply to have a white mayor that he could probably get away with nearly anything except building court-ordered scattered-site public housing in their neighborhoods. However, it seems more likely that the new mayor will use such freedom to defend his business friends instead of the neighborhoods, black or white.

The Chicago election clearly shows that a black strategy of hard-line race mobilization is a disaster, turning off many blacks and losing needed coalition partners. Black political aspirations must be framed to be inclusive and represent the general good. But Daley's kinder, gentler machine is no model for the Democrats, either. It did not try to unify blacks and whites but simply to mollify blacks and white liberals enough not to see Daley as a great threat. Daley may boost the Democrats among conservative whites a little, although many will still opt for Republicans in national elections. But any Democratic Party gains from Daley's victory come at the cost of alienating blacks and of neglecting serious action on the needs of the city.

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April 11-14

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April 11—Peoples empowerment day.
April 12—War tax resistance day.
April 13—No first strike day.
April 14—Youth day.
April 15—"No taxation for annihilation" rally and mass action.
April 16—Caravan to Yucca Mountain; interfaith seder; Shoshone closing ceremony.
*Other workshops will be offered throughout the 10 days; for more information contact A.P.T., P.O. Box 26725, Las Vegas, NV 89126, (702) 731-9644.

CHICAGO

April 14

Nomonde Ngubo, representative of the South African Mine Workers Union, will speak on "Apartheid and South Africa: Prospects for Change," 7 p.m., International House, 1414 E. 59th St. Contact Chicago DSA, 1608 N. Milwaukee, Room 403, Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 384-0327 for additional information.

May 6

The 31st Annual Thomas-Debs Dinner honors William Winpisinger, President of IAM, Vice-Chair of DSA; and Milt and Sue Cohen, longtime Chicago activists; with Dr. Quentin Young as featured speaker. At the Midland Hotel, 172 W. Adams: cock-

tails 6 p.m., dinner 7 p.m. Tickets: \$35 each or \$60 as patrons. Make checks payable to Thomas-Debs Dinner Committee. Be sure your organization is represented in our program book! Contact Chicago DSA, 1608 N. Milwaukee, Room 403, Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 384-0327 for details.

INDIANA, PA

April 18

I.U.P. will host a symposium, "Perspectives on Our National Experience: Race, Class and Gender." Speakers: John Bracey, William Chafe, Harley Shaiken, Juliet Schor, Frances Piven and Beverly Guy-Sheftall. No registration fee. Contact: Irwin Marcus, History Department, IUP, Indiana, PA 15705, (412) 357-2237, 357-2284.

WORLDWIDE

April 22

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May 4-7

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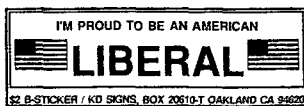
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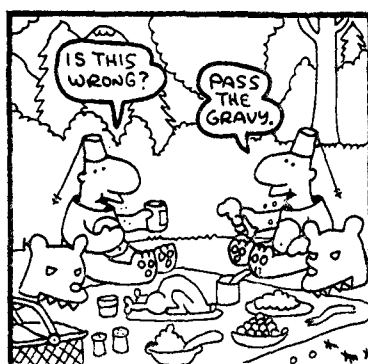
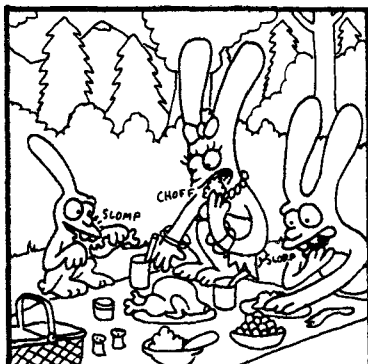
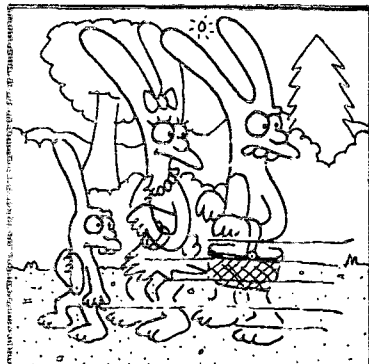
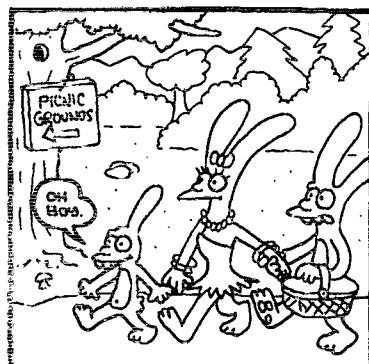
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Over Here

By Tom Engelhardt

Washington, a town ever in search of linkages, missed a crucial one at the remarkably brief hearings that confirmed Rep. Richard Cheney as the new secretary of defense. It was much noted that with Cheney at the hearing was his wife Lynne (as well as his two daughters), towering evidence of his non-womanizing nature. No one, however, noted the real linkages involved in her presence. Lynne V. Cheney heads the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). What this may mean, according to Washington insiders, is that for the first time in American history, scholars, writers, poets and artists may get a genuine break.

"You've heard of the art of war," one middle-level Pentagon official told me privately. "Well, soon you're going to hear about the war of art. Let's face it, there's hardly an area of American life that hasn't gotten a helping hand from the Pentagon. Only the other day we announced a \$30-million program to finance American electronics makers to create a new generation of high-definition television technologies.

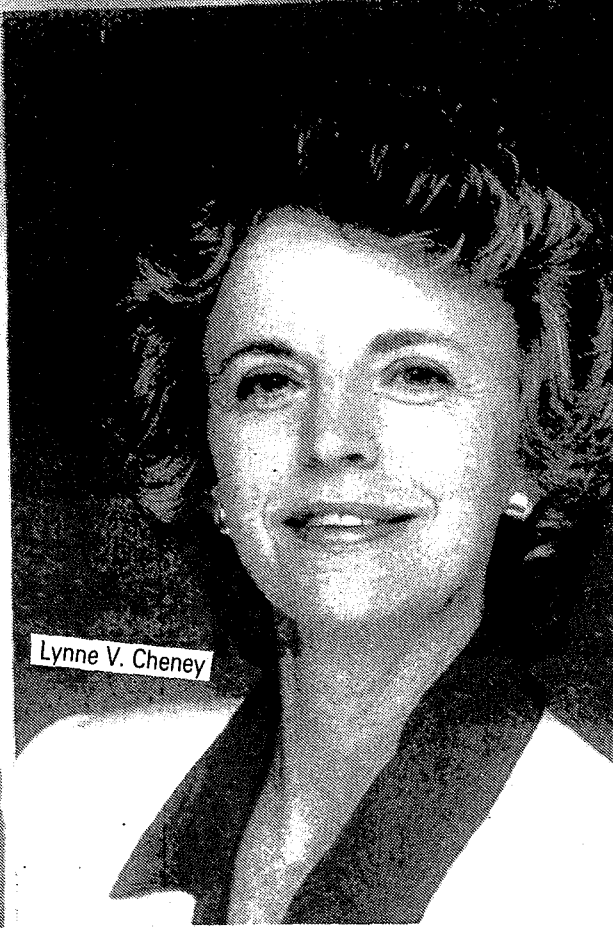
"That makes it clear that we're not about to let our technomilitary future fall into foreign hands. The same should go for art. As the Rushdie affair indicates, unless similar moves are made to shore up the arts, 21st-century America will be a pitiful helpless giant in the face of the terrorist onslaught."

Dirty dancing: To make any such moves Cheney and Cheney first have a clever conglomeration two-step to accomplish, though one that administration insiders believe to be well within the realm of possibility. Not only must the Pentagon fuse with the NEH, but the NEH, whose purview at present is only scholarship, must in turn absorb the still headless National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

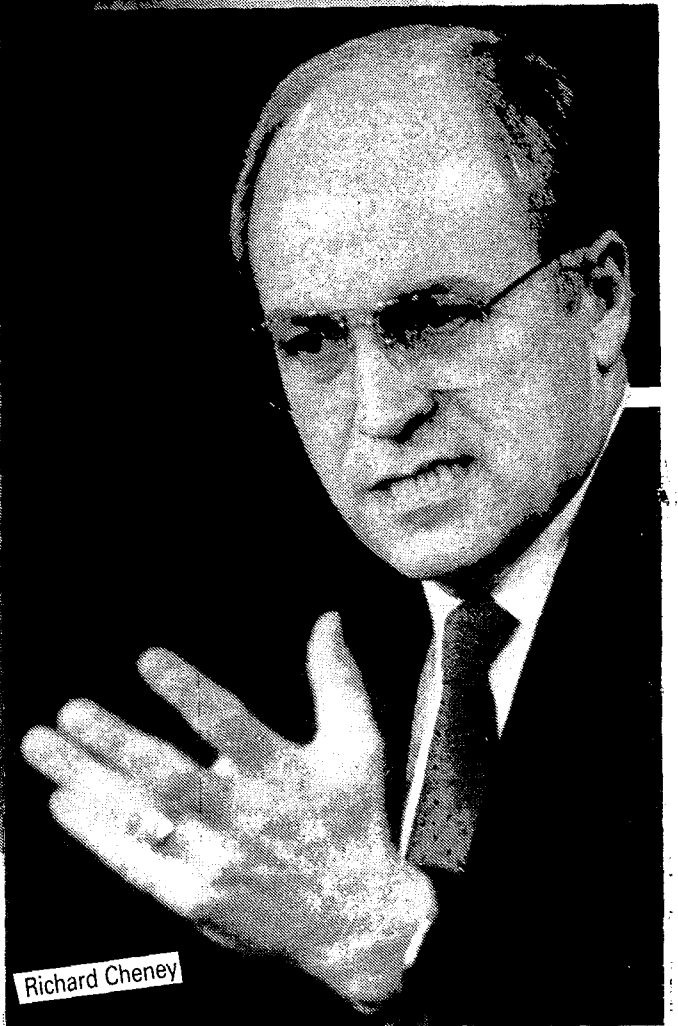
"Conglomeration is the name of the game out there in the corporate-cultural world," says the previously quoted Pentagon official. "Seven media empires control the arts and communications, and about 10 university complexes basically control higher education. If the Pentagon's going to be an effective player in American cultural life, we'd better damn well get everything we can under one big five-pointed roof."

In the privacy of their own home the Cheneyes are evidently already giving the concept of conglomeration a new meaning. Each has pledged to move swiftly (Richard Cheney as soon as he has filled the 40-odd empty posts in the Pentagon) to bring the military to bear on art and scholarship, and art and scholarship to bear on the military. Evidently, Cheney avoided the subject at his hearings for fear that the notorious congressional distaste for the arts might slow the confirmation process.

This being the Cheney's pet project, initial planning is already advancing swiftly in the Pentagon and in the NEH bureaucracy. "Look," says a Cheney aide, "once Congress and the American public get the full picture, they're going to love the idea. When the Pentagon funds a science project, immediately you're into the multibillions—the next thing you know you've got Star Wars. And with the arts you simply get more bang for your buck. Publishers get whole books for no more than a few thousand dollars each. You see, the Pentagon can fund an area like artificial intelligence up the wazoo to get itself a jet with a talking cockpit, but the point is, what's the damn thing going to say? That's where—let's face it—the arts have something to contribute. If, for instance, Shakespearean scholars or deconstructionist literary critics focus their wasted argumentative energy under military discipline, think what sort of combat plane America could field!"



Lynne V. Cheney



Richard Cheney

Merging the art of war and the war of art

Might makes write: The Pentagon, for its part, is already preparing a pilot project in which the Iowa Writers Workshop would be moved to Fort Benning, Ga., and renamed the Fort Benning School of Military Aesthetics. "If this catches on and becomes a national program, can you imagine the benefits?" adds a Pentagon procurement officer with growing enthusiasm. "Just for starters, you'd never have to read a novel set on campus again. And as for the writers, no more scrounging for freelance work that doesn't pay. No more rejections. Free food and lodging. Free computers at the motor pool. It would be paradise.

"And this is without even considering the very real benefits to the military," continued the official. "Not just superficial things like giving the army stylish urban camouflage uniforms that would blend into post-punk low-intensity warfare environments. But think of the sophistication the modern army will gain by living in the same barracks with authors, artists and scholars. With a program like this in place, we're assured that a Rushdie affair can never happen to an American author. Not with the military sensitized to literature, and writers off campuses and out of their urban hot-house environment. If they start writing not just on military bases but *about* military bases, they're sure as hell not going to insult a bunch of Moslems, are they? It's the perfect answer—just militarize the freedom of art!"

The official indicated that the Pentagon was also looking

into funding a program in which modernist literary scholars, fiction writers and performance artists would offer carefully chosen military teams a crash course entitled "Advanced Trends in World Literature." These military "SWART" teams, linked through Pentagon computer technology to global literary trends, could then spot and excise literary trouble spots around the world before terrorists even had the opportunity to take advantage of any literary endeavor—or before some possibly pernicious Third World literary trend could endanger the First World cultural canon.

"After all," adds the Pentagon official, "if there's one thing we know something about it's canons. Anyway, let's face it, it's about time somebody put a little muscle into the arts. It's not just a matter of handing a cruise missile to Norman Mailer and seeing what happens. The real question is: why should writers and artists always have to stand out there and take the flak alone?"

"It's not enough for the administration to offer a few pious words about the sacred nature of the freedom of the writer to write—not if it wants to go down in the history books as an administration that was strong on the arts. We're on a planet where the smart writer had better walk softly but carry a laser-armed pen, and I know for a fact that Dick and Lynn Cheney agree with me on that."

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